



Volunteer Handbook

Volunteers at AFLO

We always welcome volunteers on the farm. We have had companies, families, and individuals drive in from our old stomping grounds on Capitol Hill, as well as from Clarke, Frederick, Fauquier, and Loudoun counties. We appreciate the time, talent, and expertise each volunteer offers. This document is meant to inform volunteers of relevant policies and procedures so that volunteers and staff have a mutual understanding of expectations.

Policies and Procedures

A volunteer is an individual who, beyond the confines of paid employment, contributes time and service to assist AFLO in the accomplishment of its mission of providing employment and a welcoming community to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, while sustainably growing organic food for the metropolitan DC area. AFLO recruits, accepts, and dismisses volunteers on the basis of personal competence and volunteer performance, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or handicap.

Volunteer Registration Form

Potential volunteers are required to complete a registration form found on the volunteer page of AFLO's website when they are interested in volunteering: www.afarmlessordinary.org/volunteer

Criminal Background Check

All registered volunteers aged 18 years of age or older must participate in a criminal background check facilitated by AFLO. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted by AFLO. Under Virginia law, we must refuse applicants convicted of assault and battery or child abuse. All other convictions will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Volunteer Orientation

If a potential volunteer meets the needs of the organization and/or, based on their age, has a cleared criminal background check facilitated by AFLO, they will participate in a one-time, on-site, "Volunteer Orientation". At the orientation, volunteers will learn about our organization and its mission, policies, and procedures, and needed information concerning their job or jobs. Given the seasonal nature of the work at AFLO, task-specific orientation will occur in the fields.

Right of Refusal

Volunteers and staff members have the right to refuse an assignment. Contact the Farm Manager so changes can be made as needed.

Feedback and Evaluation

Volunteers will be asked to evaluate their experience at the farm concerning orientation, volunteer work and value of their experience. This will be done through informal dialog, and a written evaluation completed towards the end of AFLO's growing season. Feedback and evaluation will be used to inform changes to our programs.

Recognition

Volunteer service is very valuable to AFLO, and we will strive to do our best to recognize our volunteers informally and formally.

Confidentiality

Any records maintained on volunteers working with the AFLO, including criminal background checks, emergency information, dates of service, hours of service, and duties performed will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to the appropriate AFLO representative. All requests for information about volunteers must be through the appropriate AFLO staff member. This information will be considered confidential.

Documentation of Volunteer Hours

Volunteers are responsible for signing up for volunteer needs through the [Loudoun Cares](#) volunteer application used by AFLO. Volunteers are also responsible for signing in on the day of their shift using the identified sign-in process, every time they volunteer. This allows AFLO to provide recognition of service, validate times of service as work experience for future job references and provides AFLO with volunteer tracking data. Volunteers may obtain documentation certifying their record of volunteer hours. Letters of recommendation may be requested after a minimum of 20 hours of quality service.

Facilities and Office Equipment

Volunteers will park in designated parking areas at each farming site. All equipment, facilities and grounds are expected to be treated with respect and well cared for by all volunteers. The appropriate AFLO staff member must authorize use of the office equipment such as the fax, phone, and computer. Volunteers will have access to the equipment they need to perform their assigned duties.

Media Contact

Volunteers may not speak to the media, as an official or unofficial spokesperson of the AFLO, without prior clearance from either the Chief Operating Officer or Executive Director.

Dependability & Punctuality

Volunteers are expected to be reliable, punctual, and dependable. If the volunteer plans to be late for their scheduled time, they should email a farm manager. If a volunteer needs to cancel a volunteer shift they should do so thru their Loudoun Cares account where they signed up for the shift.

Discontinuation of Volunteer Services

A volunteer with AFLO has the right to end their service for any reason, or no reason. If a volunteer wishes to leave their service for any reason, we request they inform the Farm Manager.

AFLO reserves the same right, for the occasion when a volunteer does not uphold conduct standards or follow-through with volunteer sign-up and sign-in procedures.

If a volunteer wishes to leave his/ her service for any reason, we request they inform the Farm Manager.

Immediate Dismissal

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but not limited to gross misconduct or insubordination, breach of confidentiality, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while volunteering, theft of property or misuse of agency equipment or materials, illegal, violent, or unsafe acts, abuse (physical and /or emotional or mistreatment of clients, volunteers, of staff).

Standards of Conduct

All volunteers must adhere to the standards of conduct established by AFLO to fulfill the mission of the AFLO.

Dignity

It is important to be always sensitive to the dignity of the clients who receive AFLO services. Not only does this mean speaking to everyone at an age-appropriate level, and with respect, but also recognizing their presence whenever you are with them - no matter the level of disability. While in a client's presence, never discuss that client with anyone else unless you say something positive and include the person in the conversation. It is AFLO policy to not discuss or council on women's reproductive health.

Privacy

Never discuss the problems and/or confidences of clients, volunteers, and staff members with anyone who does not have a professional right to know. Do not use the correct names of clients if you are relaying information about situations that may have occurred at AFLO. The AFLO is a professional environment.

Confidentiality

There may be times when it becomes your duty to report confidential matters to persons in authority for the sake of the growers, staff, or other volunteers' wellbeing. Please forward your concerns privately to the appropriate staff member and no one else

Harassment Policy

Harassment includes sexual, racial, and otherwise hostile, intimidating, or offensive behaviors. It is the policy of AFLO to treat volunteers, growers, and staff with the respect and kindness they would want for themselves. Any volunteer, grower, and staff member who feels harassed should speak to an appropriate AFLO staff member like the Farm Manager or Chief Operating Officer to reach a resolution. It is the staff member's duty to listen to such complaints and to refer them to the appropriate authority.

Grievance/Complaint

Procedure Grievances and /or complaints concerning the work environment should be reported promptly to the Chief Operating Officer or Farm Manager. Every effort will be made to achieve a speedy and effective resolution. All grievances/complaints are treated as confidential.

Personal Hygiene

All volunteers, growers, and staff members must wash their hands before handling any food. Hands must be washed thoroughly after using the restroom. When pandemics or epidemics strike, such as with COVID-19, we follow Loudoun County Public Health guidelines and request that our volunteers do the same. Loudoun County Health Department's information line is available Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, at 703-737-8300. You can also send an email to health@loudoun.gov.

Please also note that volunteers may be asked to wear a surgical face mask or KN95 if handling food, exposure to dust or mold during farming activity, air quality or if a person is sneezing or coughing (for whatever reason/condition) and transmission of respiratory droplets is likely to occur because of these symptoms.

Personal Appearance

Clothing should not be revealing (thin strapped tank tops and short shorts are unacceptable). Pants are required to deter ticks and for personal field safety. No flip-flops or open toed shoes should be worn for safety reasons.

Eating

Volunteers can use the office refrigerator for personal lunches, but items must be removed at the end of every day. No food items should be stored in the refrigerator for more than 24 hours. Food may not be eaten from the fields without permission of AFLO staff.

Honesty

Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a high level of integrity and honesty in all aspects of their job performance. Honesty includes not falsifying information, not stealing from any volunteer, grower, staff member, or AFLO, and not using the AFLO property, equipment, or facilities without authorization.

Appropriate Language

Use of profane, foul, or abusive language is not permitted on the AFLO property.

Smoking Policy

AFLO is committed to the promotion of healthy lifestyles. In the spirit of that commitment, AFLO does not allow smoking on the property.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Purchasing, transferring, using, or possessing illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in any way that is illegal is prohibited while participating in AFLO activities and/or on AFLO property. Implementing this policy ensures a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all volunteers, growers, and staff members.

Safety and Liability

AFLO Community Farm will do our best to provide safe conditions for our volunteers, clients, and staff. AFLO Community Farm counts on the volunteer, grower, and the staff member to be the best protector of his or her own personal safety. Volunteers are expected to work safely, wear appropriate attire for the job, observe safety procedures, and report unsafe conditions. First Aid kits are available to take care of minor injuries.

BE PREPARED -- BE CAREFUL!

Heat Stroke

Hourly water breaks are strongly encouraged. Hourly water breaks are strictly enforced when the temperature is over 90 degrees. The breaks should be in a shady area and for at least 5 minutes. All volunteers must bring their own refillable water bottle. In addition to group water breaks, volunteers should take water breaks as needed.

Lyme Disease

AFLO strongly encourages the use of tick repellent. Long pants are required to deter ticks and for field safety. Please conduct self-examination at the end of your workday.

Sun Safety

AFLO strongly encourages the use of sunscreen and hats and light-colored clothing. AFLO encourages you to bring your own sunscreen to reapply throughout the day.

Dress for Safety

Safety glasses and work gloves are available and should be worn when requested by a staff member.

Thunderstorm Policy

Under the direction of staff, whenever thunder or lightning is present, all volunteers should move indoors until 30 minutes has passed with no thunder or lightning.

Equipment / Tools

Tools and equipment should not be used without proper authorization and supervision from the appropriate staff member. The tools and equipment may only be used for the tasks for which it is intended.

Machinery

Proper distance from all motorized machinery is no less than 50 feet. This 50-foot distance should be always maintained. Only authorized staff members may operate motorized machinery.

Abuse

At no time will AFLO volunteer be a victim of abuse by any staff, volunteer, or grower. It is our policy to assure that firm disciplinary and/or legal action is taken against those who engage in abuse.

Abuse is defined as:

1. Physical, psychological, or verbal mistreatment which may hurt or wrongly use an individual.
2. Any injury that is afflicted willfully.
3. Inhumane treatment.
4. Lack of provision of basic sustenance.
5. Sexual Abuse:
 - A sexual act, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (e) of the Annotated Code of Virginia.
 - Sexual contact, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (f) of the Annotated Code of Virginia.
 - Intercourse, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (g) of the Annotated Code of Virginia.

For the purpose of this policy, abuse does not include the performance of:

1. An accepted medical procedure that a physician orders.
2. An accepted behavioral procedure that is either ordered by a licensed psychologist or formulated by the school or Virginia Vocational Training Center or job coach. The behavioral procedure must conform to other appropriate AFLO policies.
3. Acts on the part of a staff member, volunteer, or another client which occur in self-defense shall not be considered abusive if the act is one which meets force with the least amount of force necessary to protect oneself. However, overreaction in the name of self-defense shall also be considered abuse.

Incident Reports

Incidents include abuse (as defined in the above paragraph), unusual circumstances, injuries, accidents, and situations that could develop into accidents. If an incident occurs involving or witnessed by a volunteer the appropriate staff member should be informed immediately. Incidents need to be documented on paper within 24 hours by the appropriate AFLO staff member. The staff member may require a volunteer's assistance with filling out the incident form if they witness an incident requiring a report.

Legal Liability

As a volunteer you agree to assume the risk of any injury or accident to person or property which you may sustain in connection with your participation with AFLO Community Farm. In addition, you agree to release and discharge AFLO Community Farm and any of its directors, officers, employees, volunteers, partners, growers, and affiliates and successors from any and all liability or responsibility for any such accident or injury.

Certificate of Ability

A volunteer may be asked to present a certificate from the physician if they have indicated they are under the care of a physician for any physical or psychological ailment which might impede their ability to perform their duties safely. If a volunteer or staff member enters a course of treatment, which might adversely impact the performance of their duties, they should consult with the appropriate AFLO staff member.

Safeguarding Possession

Volunteers are responsible for safeguarding their personal possessions while on the AFLO Community Farm property.

Medical Release

If an emergency should arise while volunteering at AFLO requiring medical care or treatment, that needs authorization to select and designate nurses, physicians, and / or surgeons to furnish medical and/or surgical care. Authorization is needed to obtain medical/surgical care as needed, in the judgment of a physician or surgeon holding a physician's surgeon certificate issued by the Board of Medical Examiners of the State of Virginia. Authorization is needed by the AFLO Community Farm to absolve the AFLO, nurses, physicians, and / or surgeons from any and all liability for their acts rendered in good faith.