



Prevent Blindness Wisconsin

Volunteer Handbook

Updated August 2007

*Welcome to Prevent Blindness Wisconsin!
We are delighted that you have chosen to be among the thousands of volunteers,
who are committed to the prevention of blindness and preservation of sight.*

*We sincerely hope your involvement with Prevent Blindness provides you
with many opportunities for both personal and professional growth
as well as a sense of contribution to a truly worthwhile cause.*

PURPOSE OF THE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

This Volunteer Handbook has been developed to provide you with useful information about Prevent Blindness Wisconsin (PBW). It also exists to inform you of the organization's expectations of you as a PBW volunteer and what you can expect throughout this volunteering experience.

Though volunteering for Prevent Blindness Wisconsin is a non-paid commitment, you are invaluable. This handbook applies both when you are on-site at the PBW office and when you are representing the organization as a PBW volunteer at any off-site venue.

The term volunteer is used throughout this handbook to indicate any non-paid individual committed to PBW, including but not limited to vision screening volunteers, office and event volunteers, and interns.

Please bring any further questions that you might have to the Volunteer Coordinator, who will be happy to answer them.

After you have had a chance to review the Volunteer Handbook, please sign and date one copy of the Agreement Sheet at the back of the handbook and return it to the Volunteer Coordinator.

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ABOUT PREVENT BLINDNESS

Prevent Blindness America, founded in 1908, is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, certified vision screening training, community and patient service programs and research.

ABOUT THE WISCONSIN AFFILIATE

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin, Inc. was founded in 1958. The organization, composed of lay and professional volunteers, strives not only to prevent blindness, but also to preserve healthy vision for people of all ages throughout the state.

The mission of Prevent Blindness Wisconsin is to prevent blindness and preserve sight.

This mission is accomplished by providing education, vision screenings and follow-up through a network of trained individuals. We rely upon volunteers, school nurses, public health professionals, safety professionals, teachers, and many more to conduct our free programs.

Our principal services include:

- 👁️ Preschool screening services
- 👁️ School age screening services
- 👁️ Adult screening services
- 👁️ Eye health and screening workshops
- 👁️ Speakers for adult groups
- 👁️ Information and referral services
- 👁️ Glaucoma high risk programs
- 👁️ Sports and industrial eye safety programs

The purpose of Prevent Blindness Wisconsin's volunteer program is to further the mission of the organization, to assist in raising awareness of common eye problems in the community, and to actively participate in the identification of common eye problems through vision screening.

GENERAL POLICIES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin is dedicated to providing all qualified persons with equal opportunities. All actions and decisions are carried out without regard to race, color, religion, age over 40, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, parental status and disability that is unrelated to the essential functions of the job.

The spirit and essence of this policy also applies to our actions and decisions with respect to people we serve, our members, volunteers, customers and suppliers.

HARASSMENT

You have the right to volunteer in an environment free from intimidation and harassment because of your sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, age over 40, ancestry, national origin and handicap or for any other reason. We prohibit any action or decision that constitutes physical, verbal or visual harassment, whether in the office or at any work related setting or function. This policy includes all employees, managers, volunteers, outside clients or vendors of Prevent Blindness.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

We are all responsible for assuring compliance with this policy and responsible for creating an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise. Further, all employees and volunteers are responsible for respecting the rights of their coworkers. The President, however, has the additional responsibility to monitor and report on this policy for the organization. All matters pertinent to this policy should be brought to his or her attention. The spirit and essence of this policy also applies to our actions and decisions concerning the people we serve, our members, volunteers, customers and suppliers.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin reserves the right to do a criminal background check on its volunteers, including, but not limited to, those volunteers who will have direct contact with children and other vulnerable populations. You have the right to refuse authorization of such reference checks, however, that may limit your candidacy for the volunteer position.

Because many of our programs and services maintain direct contact of children and other vulnerable populations through our vision screening services and/or may allow volunteer's access to monetary/valuable donations through fundraising and special events, it is the policy of the organization to have zero tolerance for volunteer applicants who:

- 👁 are registered sex offenders
- 👁 have been convicted of sexual assault or assault of any other nature, murder, abuse (child or otherwise), or any other violent crime
- 👁 have been convicted of theft, fraud or any other financially-driven crime

- ☞ Have been convicted of possession of drug or other illegal substances/paraphernalia in the .past five years

Conviction is defined as final judgment of a verdict or a finding of guilty, a plea of guilty or a plea of no contest in any state or federal court of jurisdiction in a criminal case, regardless of whether an appeal is pending or could be filed. Conviction does not include a final judgment which has been expunged by pardon, reversed, set aside or otherwise rendered invalid.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

You are encouraged to speak with your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator often about how well you are meeting the responsibilities of your volunteer position. Prevent Blindness Wisconsin also appreciates any feedback at any time and may ask for your feedback on the volunteer experience on occasion.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION/COUNSELING

If you fail to follow our policies and procedures or perform at acceptable levels, your supervisor will make every effort to bring the matter to your attention and work with you to improve the situation. In most cases, discussions with your supervisor will be informal, as the desired improvements are often achievable. If improvements are not made, we will begin to document the problems as well as the desired solutions and a timetable for accomplishments will be set. Failure to achieve consistent levels of improvement may involve changing your responsibilities, or Prevent Blindness Wisconsin choosing to terminate your services as a volunteer.

RETENTION POLICIES

ORIENTATION

When you are accepted as a PBW volunteer, following the application process and background check, the Volunteer Coordinator (or the Program Director-Statewide or the Northeast Office Manager) will provide you with an overall introduction to Prevent Blindness, our structure, mission, goals, and objectives, policies and procedures, as found in this Volunteer Handbook. Any further questions/clarifications about the organization and your role as a PBW volunteer may be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Your supervisor will be responsible for general staff introductions and to familiarize you with your job responsibilities, including the use of necessary equipment.

After the general orientation, volunteers will undergo training specific to their responsibilities, which may include vision screening training and orientation to the national database collection site.

Volunteer Responsibilities and Development

Volunteers are asked to participate in approximately one volunteering event per month (or 10 volunteer events per year), or the equivalent of 2-4 hours of volunteer time per month.

Vision screeners, after screening for a year, have the opportunity to become a vision screening group coordinator and/or form their own vision screening group in their area.

Vision screening group coordinators are asked to organize approximately one group volunteering event per month (or 8-10 screenings per year). Those interested in becoming a group coordinator should be mentored by their current group coordinator to learn more about the coordinating responsibilities.

Other non-screening volunteers should communicate and work closely with their direct supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator when interested in increasing responsibilities and/or varying volunteering responsibilities.

RESIGNATION

You are free to resign from volunteering at any time without having to state the reason(s) for your decision. We request that you put your decision in writing and give us sufficient notice so that arrangements can be made to cover your commitments. Sufficient notice is considered 2 weeks if you are a volunteer, during which time you must be present and working during the period of notice.

We ask that all belongings of the organization, including vision screening equipment and all other property belonging to PBW be returned to the Volunteer Coordinator (or the Program Director-Statewide or the Northeast Office Manager) on your last day of work.

Volunteers who leave Prevent Blindness in good standing and later wish to return are eligible for reinstatement.

DISMISSAL

We are free to terminate your volunteer status at any time.

We ask that all belongings of the organization, including screening equipment and all other property belonging to us be returned to the Volunteer Coordinator (or the Program Director-Statewide or the Northeast Office Manager) on your last day of work.

SEPARATION INTERVIEW

If you resign from volunteering, you will be asked to give us the benefit of your thoughts about your volunteer experience and the organization in general. Although you do not have to agree to this final interview process, we sincerely hope your candid comments will assist in making Prevent Blindness a better organization to volunteer for and our mission more attainable.

OFFICE PRACTICES

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire: If you discover a fire or there is reasonable evidence of one, you are responsible for activating the fire alarm and exiting the building. Fire exits can be found in our office through the window on the south side of the building.

Tornado: During threatening weather we will monitor radio broadcasts in addition to paying attention to the local siren. If you hear the siren or are told that it has sounded, you must go immediately to the lowest part of the stairwell in the building and remain calm until the emergency passes.

Bomb Threat: In the event of a bomb threat, immediately notify your supervisor who will begin the evacuation of our offices and alert building management.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

You are responsible for safeguarding your own personal property. We recommend that you do not bring items of great value to the office and avoid situations where clothing can be damaged.

AUTOMOBILE POLICIES

We may ask you for proof of a driver's license and auto liability and casualty insurance if you use your car for company business. To protect the organization from liability suits, we maintain employer's "non-ownership" coverage.

When you are driving on company business, it is mandatory policy that you wear your seatbelt and use only hands free cell phones.

REGULAR WORKING HOURS

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin's normal workweek is from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Volunteers are asked to participate in approximately one volunteering event per month (or 10 volunteer events per year), or the equivalent of 2-4 hours of volunteer time per month.

Interns are asked to dedicate a minimum of 3 hours per week for the duration of one semester. Other arrangements may be made based upon agreements with the intern's college/university.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

You are expected to attend a scheduled volunteer event that you have committed to. Regular and punctual attendance is a requirement and a condition of volunteering. When occasional illness or other unavoidable situation makes it impossible to come to or stay, you are responsible to personally notify your supervisor as much in advance as possible.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

At times, poor weather conditions make it difficult to arrive on time for a volunteering commitment. As we are a service-oriented organization, however, we must remain responsive to the public, our contributors and partners. For this reason, we will be open and operating during normal business hours, despite adverse conditions.

If you are unable to attend a scheduled volunteer commitment due to inclement weather, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover your absence.

For those quite rare events where it is determined that travel to work may be hazardous, you will be called by 7:15 a.m. and advised of a delayed opening or that the office has been closed.

APPEARANCE

Prevent Blindness expects volunteers, whenever representing PBW, to maintain a neat, well-groomed appearance at all times. Volunteers should avoid extremes in dress.

Volunteers will be provided with a name badge at the beginning of their volunteer status. Volunteers are asked to wear this name badge at all times when volunteering for Prevent Blindness Wisconsin in the office, at a vision screening site, or at any other volunteer event.

CONDUCT

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin requires order and discipline to succeed and to promote efficiency, productivity and cooperation among its volunteers. The orderly and efficient operations of Prevent Blindness Wisconsin require that volunteers maintain proper standards of conduct at all times.

Volunteers who fail to maintain proper standards of conduct toward their work, their co-workers or Prevent Blindness vendors, or who violate any Prevent Blindness Wisconsin policies, may be asked to stop acting as a volunteer for the agency.

Prohibited Conduct: We do not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. All representatives of PBW, including employees and volunteers, are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

Reporting Procedures: Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a supervisor or the President. Reports can be made anonymously and all reported incidents will be

USE OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT

We encourage you to use our computer systems, telephones, facsimile machine and photocopiers to be as productive as possible. If you are not familiar with any of the machines, please ask your supervisor for training. If you discover a service problem with any of the machines, please bring it to your supervisor's attention rather than attempting to fix it yourself.

Because of the extensive use that we give our equipment, and its importance to all of us, you are discouraged from using it for other than occasional personal use.

E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY

E-mail Policy: The E-mail system is the property of Prevent Blindness Wisconsin. It has been provided by Prevent Blindness Wisconsin for use in conducting Prevent Blindness Wisconsin business. All communications and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in this system are the property of Prevent Blindness Wisconsin. At this time, volunteers do not have access to PBW's E-mail system.

Internet Use Policy: Volunteers may be provided with access to the Internet to assist them in performing their jobs. The Internet can be a valuable source of information and research. In addition, e-mail can provide excellent means of communicating with other employees, volunteers, outside vendors, and other businesses. Use of the Internet, however, must be tempered with common sense and good judgment.

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet. Similarly, you should not expect privacy when using the PBW computer system, and PBW reserves the right to monitor any and all computer usage and to block any inappropriate content.

Your use of the Internet is governed by this policy and the E-mail Policy. Prevent Blindness Wisconsin reserves the right to modify any policy at any time, with or without notice. A more detailed explanation of our policy can be accessed if requested.

CODE OF ETHICS

Prevent Blindness Wisconsin is committed to a clear communication that all employees and volunteers conduct themselves within the following Code of Ethics, meeting both the implicit and explicit standards described.

All business actions shall be governed by the following:

- 👁 All existing pertinent laws will be obeyed in both letter and spirit.
- 👁 All organization policies and procedures will next govern.
- 👁 Where no law or organization policy is established, high standards of ethical conduct are expected of all volunteers.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

It is every volunteer's responsibility to ensure that any information gained by virtue of volunteering with Prevent Blindness is not improperly disclosed to anyone, including other volunteers, except as are necessary to perform job responsibilities.

Confidential or proprietary information is defined as any information belonging to Prevent Blindness Wisconsin, its employees, or related organizations that could be used by others for their own advantage or to the detriment of the organization, its employees and related organizations.

All information about PBW clients, other volunteers, and employees is to be kept confidential by the volunteers. This includes, but is not limited to: contact information, age and date of birth, vision screening results, and outcomes of professional eye exams.

Volunteers who terminate their service with Prevent Blindness for any reason shall not take, copy, or retain documents containing confidential information obtained while volunteering.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Volunteers of Prevent Blindness Wisconsin shall act with objectivity and shall avoid any circumstances or appearances, which might cast doubt on their ability to act with objectivity concerning the organization's interests.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

All volunteers, in the exercise of their personal political freedoms and prerogatives, must be sensitive to the non-political position of Prevent Blindness and work to preserve and enhance that position.

PRIVACY POLICY

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

Prevent Blindness will not collect information about any volunteer for use in making decisions without the volunteer's written authorization. This authorization will include all the information being requested.

Before the Volunteer Coordinator contacts a reference, the individual must sign an authorization for disclosure of information. Questions are confined to areas involving past employment and education. The Volunteer Coordinator will make efforts to assure that information about an individual is accurate, timely and complete.

VOLUNTEER RECORDS

The volunteer file, located in the Volunteer Coordinator's office, is the sole depository of official volunteer information. Any and all records concerning volunteers kept by supervisors, for whatever purpose, are considered unofficial and are discouraged. This is done in order to avoid duplicating information, preventing conflicting documentation and controlling the security of confidential material.

Volunteers have access to their own personnel file upon reasonable notice. The file must remain in the Volunteer Coordinator's office, however, and the Volunteer Coordinator will assist the volunteer in reviewing the file and interpreting, if necessary. The following job-related records are maintained in the volunteer's personal file and are available for review and copying by volunteer at the volunteer's expense:

- ④ Applications and resumes
- ④ Information obtained from reference checks
- ④ Department Interview Reports
- ④ Performance evaluations
- ④ Communication records
- ④ Attendance records
- ④ Training and development records
- ④ Photo release agreement

CORRECTION OF VOLUNTEER RECORDS

Any individual who believes that information about him or her is not accurate, timely or complete may request that the information be corrected or eliminated. The Volunteer Coordinator will either make the correction or explain why the change cannot be made. If the correction or amendment is not made, the individual may file a statement to be kept with the record explaining why he or she believes the record should be changed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Having attended Prevent Blindness Wisconsin’s volunteer orientation and received and read the preceding Volunteer Handbook, including the general policies, office practices, confidentiality, code of ethics and privacy policies, I understand my responsibilities and rights as a volunteer and agree to abide by the volunteer policies and protocols outlined in this Handbook.

I agree to carry out only the responsibilities mentioned within this Handbook and recognize that if I should fail to role model appropriate behavior as defined above, my volunteer placement may be terminated.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian’s Signature: _____ Date: _____
(if volunteer is under 18 years of age)



PHOTOGRAPH RELEASE (optional)

I, _____, give Prevent Blindness Wisconsin permission to use my picture in publications. These publications will be used to promote the organization and educate the general public about the organization and its programs.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian’s Signature: _____ Date: _____
(if volunteer is under 18 years of age)