

City of Nashua
Arlington Street Community
Center



Program Handbook
For Volunteers and
Community Center Staff

2018 Edition

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Acknowledgement

The City of Nashua's Arlington Street Community Center and MBK Program gratefully acknowledges the contributions of parents, students, local college students, retirees, business staff, and community members who give of their time and energy to enhance Nashua residents' lives.

Explanation

This handbook, prepared by the MBK Executive Committee, is intended to serve as a resource to assist you in your role as a volunteer. The handbook outlines procedures for volunteers, staff, and programming partners.

Arlington Street Community Center

Mission and Purpose

The mission of the Arlington Street Community Center is to develop links between schools, parents, business leaders, and the community at-large through a community space where services are available to assist with the needs of every student and family.

The purpose of ASCC is:

To assist in fostering the goals of the Nashua My Brother's Keeper initiative, which are to encourage the community to work towards a common objective and implement a coherent 'cradle-to-college – and – career' strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential. The three objectives are:

1. Entering school ready to learn
2. Reading at grade level by third grade
3. Preventing violence and providing second chances

The center provides a community space to promote:

- A welcoming atmosphere
- A structured and supportive environment
- Positive and caring role models
- Individuality and creativity
- A tone of mutual respect
- Sharing of resources
- A philosophy of continuous improvement

History

In May 2016, a summit initiated by Mayor Donchess' acceptance of the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge was attended by over 70 community agencies and City departments. They identified the need for a community center based on a community school model that operates through a partnership between the schools and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement would lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.

Volunteer Program: Overview

The ASCC depends on the community not only participating in its programming but also helping to ensure its success in other ways. Volunteer community members are responsible for managing the volunteer program.

Working with the support of the ASCC Director and MBK Board, the coordinators meet regularly to share ideas, discuss problems and solutions, and learn about available resources. These forums also provide the necessary information and assistance needed to maintain and strengthen programs already in place, and to develop new programs.

Why Volunteer?

Becoming a volunteer in any program can be very advantageous, not only for those who may benefit from receiving specific services, but for those who selflessly give their time to make a difference in the lives of others. For the volunteer, true altruism can bring about an enhanced sense of pride, have a positive effect on mental and physical health, and be deeply rewarding and meaningful. For individuals in the community who may gain support, a volunteer can be a strong advocate, impart valuable expertise, establish strong relationships, and provide a visible and meaningful difference in their lives. Our volunteers are willing to spend time in the center because they want to contribute to our community's success and help youth and families; many veteran volunteers tell us that they end up benefiting much more than they ever imagined.

Volunteer

Qualifications

A volunteer needs to:

- Be a kind, responsible, and positive adult role model
- Work toward the common goal of improving life outcomes
- Be committed to assigned volunteer work
- Be flexible and dedicated in fulfilling all obligations
- Be a team player
- Work cooperatively with center personnel, and contribute positively to an inclusive academic culture and environment

Guidelines

A volunteer is:

Committed

- To participate in program orientation and training, as needed
- To sign the volunteer book at arrival and at departure and wear a volunteer badge while in the community center
- To maintain a record of all volunteer hours for recordkeeping purposes in the volunteer log in the ASCC Office
- To be dependable and prompt; if a volunteer appointment can't be kept, the ASCC contact should be notified as far in advance as possible

Discreet

- Volunteer work is to remain confidential

In keeping with the ASCC's mission of providing a safe, nurturing, and motivating environment for all our participants, ASCC asks all volunteers to respect privacy. While volunteering, please keep observations about others behavior, academic performance, and individual circumstances confidential, and do not discuss privately or publically with others.

If a participant confides in a volunteer about any harm being done to themselves or someone else, the threat of harm must be reported immediately to the ASCC staff or the director.

Discuss with appropriate ASCC personnel or program lead issues regarding:

- Violations of policies or procedures
- Individual participants or program issues

Consistent

- Follow ASCC regulations, as explained during orientation
- Recognize the volunteer's role as a positive model in behavior, speech, and dress to children
- Work with participants in supervised areas designated by ASCC

Caring

- Motivate
- Build self-confidence, self-esteem, and mutual respect
- Praise accomplishments
- Respect the needs of students
- Communicate to participants how much you enjoy being with them
- Provide positive reinforcement

Professional in Dress and Demeanor

- Check with ASCC staff about appropriate attire
- Notify appropriate ASCC staff with concerns regarding volunteers

Knowledgeable

- Keep a record of volunteer assignments and training because volunteer work is accepted by business and industry as work experience
- Dependent upon the nature of the volunteer position, additional qualifications and/or requirements may apply

What a Volunteer Should Know

The following is a list of general policies and procedures. Specific program policies and procedures may vary. Volunteers should be made aware of these variations at the time of orientation and placement.

General ASCC policies and procedures

Place of work	Usually assigned by ASCC staff
Taking students from ASCC	Strictly prohibited
Student discipline	Volunteer may not discipline student(s)
Parking	Available parking is be designated by ASCC
ASCC Office	Use of ASCC office is restricted to staff and volunteers
Smoking	ASCC is a non-smoking facility
Sign-in procedures	Volunteers are asked to sign in at arrival at ASCC and wear a volunteer/visitor badge while in the center, and sign out when leaving
Absence procedures	Volunteers are requested to notify ASCC Staff of any absence or schedule change
Custodial services	Volunteers need to inform ASCC Staff if maintenance staff need
Cell phone	Use only when program is covered
Medicine, First aid	No Medicine should be administered by volunteers, First Aid Kits is located in the ASCC office
Fire drills	For safety, volunteers must follow the rules and examples of the ASCC Staff with whom they are volunteering
Interaction with student	Volunteer creates an atmosphere of mutual respect

What Volunteers Do

The scope of volunteer work is unlimited and is determined by the particular needs of the program.

A volunteer's time commitment varies according to the needs of the assignment.

Common Areas of Volunteer Service

After-School Programs
Chaperones
Program Aides
Clerical Aides
Computer Supervision/Instruction
Support Staff
Fundraising Organizers
Library/Media Center Assistants
Material Preparation
Newsletter / Calendar updates
Homework Help
Tutors

What Volunteers Do Not Do

- Release a child to any person other than the parent without explicit instruction and written permission from parent. Person(s) other than the parent picking up a child must provide proper identification prior to the release of the child.
- Diagnose or prescribe instructional programs
- Evaluate Youth

ASCC Director

The ASCC director plays a vital role in the overall operations of the ASCC volunteer program. The director determines how programs are utilized and accepted by the community. Because the ASCC director has the ultimate responsibility for the center, the Director needs to know how the volunteer program functions. The director provides leadership, support, and recognition to the program and its participants.

Volunteer Coordinator

The coordinator works closely with the ASCC director and acts as a liaison between the ASCC staff and volunteers. The ASCC volunteer coordinator promotes and implements existing and new relationships between the ASCC and the community through the effective use of volunteers and community resources. The volunteer coordinator's role is central to building an atmosphere of trust and confidence between the ASCC and community

Guidelines

Requesting a Volunteer

- Determine how a volunteer can be of service to you and the program; subject areas where assistance is needed; time of day; day of week, length of volunteer assignment
- Complete a ASCC volunteer request form and return to the ASCC Volunteer coordinator or director

Preparing for the Volunteer

- Introduce the volunteer and explain his/her role
- Discuss expected behavior
- Answer any questions the volunteer may have

Orientation and Training of the Volunteer

- Volunteers receive general orientation and training from the volunteer coordinator before they start their duties
- The coordinator or program lead is responsible for giving the volunteer specific orientation and training for assignment
- The volunteer may need to meet prior to the first volunteering session to discuss needs and expectations and to set up a schedule of days and time for the volunteer to report

Appreciation

Recognizing the efforts of volunteers is a shared responsibility.

- Volunteers have proven to be most dependable and successful when they feel satisfaction and appreciation in their assignment
- “Thank you” can never be said enough

Risk Management

Volunteer programs and all youth-serving organizations today, are becoming increasingly concerned about issues related to liability and risk management. Sadly, the very organizations developed to work with young people today may serve unknowingly as a catalyst through which others with ulterior motives attempt to gain access to children.

The ASCC volunteer screening policy requires all volunteers to read and complete the Volunteer Assurances Form. Because of the heightened concern for the safety of youth and families and changes in state laws, the ASCC includes additional screening for 'designated' volunteers. All designated volunteers are fingerprinted to initiate a FBI criminal history background check.

Designated volunteers are individuals who are volunteering to serve as a program lead or a mentor. Designated volunteers are defined as volunteers who have the potential of being in a long-term, less-supervised setting than other ASCC volunteers.

The screening process for volunteer application may vary slightly depending on the volunteer assignment.

Below are suggested guidelines for screening before placement.

- Potential volunteers complete an application
- Interview may be required
- Reference may be requested
- Each potential volunteer is required to read and sign the Volunteer Assurances Form stating that they have read and understood RSA 632-A:10
- Dependent upon the nature of the volunteer position, additional qualifications and/or requirements may apply

Appreciation

Thank you!

The ASCC is possible only through the efforts of dedicated volunteers and personnel. Without all of you, the community center activities would not happen at the scale and scope at which they do today. Please know that the city and staff who you support very much appreciate your time, effort, patience, cooperation, intellect, compassion, hard work, and goodwill.

Thank you for making a difference in our community!