



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Vision

Healthy, accessible, sustainable food for all.

Mission

We work in partnership to create a healthier city by empowering people, increasing access to healthy food, and advocating for systemic changes that reduce food insecurity.



Ottawa Food Bank
La Banque d'Alimentation d'Ottawa

Message from the Volunteer Coordinator Jo-Anne Turple

Thank you for volunteering your time in support of the Ottawa Food Bank. We are pleased to welcome you aboard and are grateful for the support and benefits that you will undoubtedly offer to our organization. Since its inception in 1984, the Ottawa Food Bank has relied on the support and enthusiasm of volunteers, like you, to enhance our mission of providing food to Ottawa's most vulnerable citizens. Thank you for helping us to fulfill this mission.

In the following pages, you will find information to orient you to the Ottawa Food Bank and to help you become more familiar with our programs, policies, and procedures. Please review the contents of this handbook and refer to it regularly as you establish your role as a volunteer.

Welcome to the Ottawa Food Bank volunteer team!

Message from the Manager of Human Resources Mia Eriksson Blundell

Thank you for choosing the Ottawa Food Bank to receive the most important gift you have to give – your time!

Our organization, along with a powerful network of over 100 food programs across the city, work to ensure that everyone in our community has access to healthy and nutritious food. As a volunteer, you are a critical part of that vision, ensuring that we can provide food to 40,000 people every month. What may seem like just a few hours of your time, means a lot to a family who receives the food hamper you helped prepare.

I hope you enjoy working with the Ottawa Food Bank. Thank you for choosing to work with us.



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SECTION ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK

Overview

Created as a temporary measure in 1984, the Ottawa Food Bank continues to provide fresh and non-perishable food, as well as supplies such as diapers, toiletries, and cleaning supplies to its network of over 100 emergency food programs across the city of Ottawa. Our main goal is to provide emergency food relief to people in need in our city, while also working towards doing food banking better and making change. We are doing this by focusing on four areas:

- Improving access to healthy food
- Growing capacity and resilience in our food bank network
- Cultivating social innovation in food banking
- Participating in advocacy and social change

Volunteer Program

As a volunteer with the Ottawa Food Bank, you may be involved in supporting any number of activities and departments and have multiple supervisors depending on the volunteer activity. Regardless of who you are assisting, the responsibility to oversee your involvement falls under the Volunteer Program, headed by the Volunteer Coordinator.

The purpose of our Volunteer Program is to enhance and support the services, administration, and mission of the Ottawa Food Bank by engaging individuals in a variety of volunteer positions.

The Ottawa Food Bank Volunteer Program objectives are to:

- Support and enhance the mission of the Ottawa Food Bank
- Address human resource gaps and provide volunteers engagement where appropriate
- Offer relevant volunteer placements that contribute to volunteers' personal and/or professional development in a safe and positive working environment
- Raise the profile of volunteers within the organization and in the wider community
- Seek, consider, and value feedback from our volunteers
- Become a model of best practices in volunteer management



Ottawa Food Bank Departmental Overview

Communications and Development Team

- Fundraising
- Special events
- Donor relations
- Communication

Food industry development

- Community Engagement and Events Team
- Community fundraising events
- Special events
- Individual/group online fundraising events
- Ottawa Food Bank signature events
- Food drives

Community Harvest Team

- Manages farm
- Grows fresh produce for distribution

Finance and Administration Team

- Finance and administration
- Human resources
- Volunteers
- Front reception

Operations Team

- Warehouse operation
- Transportation fleet

Programs and Planning Team

- Agency support
- Diet and nutrition
- Education and programming
- Community development



SECTION TWO: VOLUNTEERING AT THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK

Benefits of Volunteering

People are motivated to volunteer and support the Ottawa Food Bank for a variety of reasons. We welcome and benefit from the services of volunteers, whose motivations and interests are diverse. In return, we hope that as a volunteer, you will experience one or more of the following:

- The opportunity to contribute your knowledge, skills, and experience towards making a genuine difference for those experiencing food insecurity in our city
- Useful training and orientations in a variety of settings, as well as meaningful work experience
- Joining the Ottawa Food Bank community and being included in events, activities, and updates
- Giving back to the community while meeting wonderful and diverse new people along the way

Roles Within the Volunteer Program

Volunteer

Volunteers are people who give their time freely in support of the cause, with no expectation of monetary reward. As a volunteer you make take on one or more of our volunteer roles which supports the Ottawa Food Bank's vision and mission.

As a volunteer you will:

- Receive direction and guidance on your volunteer work from our Volunteer Supervisor
- Perform the tasks you have agreed upon
- Adhere to your agreed schedule and notify the Volunteer Coordinator or cancel your shift if anything changes
- Report any issues or problems to staff at Ottawa Food Bank

Volunteer Supervisor

Volunteer supervisors are the Ottawa Food Bank employees who directly supervise a volunteer activity. They are responsible for giving direction and orientation of volunteer work and for providing you with the resources needed to perform your volunteer duties. The Volunteer Supervisor is the first point of contact for volunteers who have questions about their work and working conditions.

The Volunteer Supervisor:

- Works with the Volunteer Coordinator to create volunteer job descriptions
- Ensures that you have an appropriate work and the resources required to fulfill your duties
- Provides you with constructive feedback and support for your work
- Maintains a safe and respectful working environment



Volunteer Coordinator

The Ottawa Food Bank's Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the program meets the needs of both the organization and the volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator is also responsible for implementing supporting policies and procedures in consultation with the Ottawa Food Bank's Human Resources Manager.

The Volunteer Coordinator:

- Recruits and screens volunteers
- Creates volunteer job descriptions in consultation with Volunteer Supervisors
- Maintains volunteer records
- Works with staff to support their supervisory roles
- Communicates with staff and volunteers on issues related to volunteering
- Ensures that volunteers are included and recognized within the Ottawa Food Bank

What You Should Know as a Volunteer

As a volunteer at the Ottawa Food Bank, you are relied upon to support the work of the Ottawa Food Bank and to represent the organization with professionalism and integrity. The following section will inform you of the Ottawa Food Bank's expectations of volunteers. If you have any questions about this section or anything else related to expectations, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Role as an Ambassador

We encourage our volunteers to share general information regarding the Ottawa Food Bank and the work we do, including your volunteer experiences. Volunteers provide a valuable front-line account of the work done by the Ottawa Food Bank and the impact in our community. It is important to remember however, that as a volunteer, you do not speak on behalf the Ottawa Food Bank in an official capacity. Requests for official information, including media, should always be referred the Ottawa Food Bank's communications team.

Commitment

The Ottawa Food Bank volunteer program does not have a minimum length of service commitment attached to our volunteer roles. We attempt to be flexible with scheduling whenever possible in conjunction with the operational needs of the organization.

Attendance

The work performed by volunteers is vital to Ottawa Food Bank' daily operation at our warehouse, farm, and special events. Please arrive on time for your scheduled shifts and cancel shifts you are not able to attend. Cancelling via the online volunteer system allows another volunteer the opportunity to sign up.



Respect

The Ottawa Food Bank promotes a welcoming, respectful, and equitable work environment. Immediately alert your Volunteer Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if you feel that you are not being treated in a respectful manner while working in your role as a volunteer. The Ottawa Food Bank takes these matters very seriously and steps will be taking immediately to address any such issues.

Confidentiality

Ottawa Food Bank volunteers hold positions of trust. As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any Ottawa Food Bank information as well as any personal and confidential client or donor data being used or discussed while fulfilling your volunteer duties. To participate as a volunteer, you must understand, agree to, and accept a Confidentiality Clause with your volunteer waiver. Please bring any questions or concerns about confidentiality to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Ottawa Food Bank Equipment Use

Volunteers in an administration role, will be required to use a various types of office equipment. Please ensure that you are fully trained on how to properly operate any equipment before you use it. If ever you are uncertain, please ask your Volunteer Supervisor or another member of the staff. This equipment could include but is not limited to the mail machine, photocopier, phone system, and more. Volunteers are not permitted to use equipment in the warehouse or on the farm unless professionally licensed and sanctioned to do so by the Ottawa Food Bank.

Volunteer Dismissal

In most cases of conflict or challenges, the Ottawa Food Bank commits to find a mutually suitable resolution. There are however serious situations when it is necessary to terminate a volunteer's role with the Ottawa Food Bank.

The Ottawa Food Bank will immediately dismiss any volunteer:

- Who does not work in a respectful manner or exhibits any threatening behavior, either verbally or physically, to other volunteers, Ottawa Food Bank staff or associates
- Who attends a volunteer role in an impaired state
- Who blatantly disregards health and safety protocols
- For the theft or intentional damage of Ottawa Food Bank property or the property of other volunteers, Ottawa Food Bank staff or associates



SECTION THREE: WORKPLACE OVERVIEW

Ottawa Food Bank Warehouse

The Ottawa Food Bank warehouse and offices are located at 1317 Michael Street, Ottawa Ontario. The Ottawa Food Bank is open Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Parking

- There is free but limited parking in the lot as well as 3 hours street parking in the surrounding area

When working onsite at the Ottawa Food Bank, volunteers are invited to use the volunteer room and kitchen facilities as well as lockers. In the volunteer room kitchen area, a selection of dishes and cutlery, as well as bottled water, coffee and tea is provided. Everyone who uses the space is responsible for keeping it clean and tidy. This includes:

- Clearing and cleaning tables if used
- placing used dishware into the dishwasher
- wiping the counter and the interior of the microwave if used
- removing your snacks/lunch from the fridge at the end of your shift

Volunteer roles that take place on site or originate at the Ottawa Food Bank include:

- [Food Sorting](#) and Operational Support

Off-Site Volunteering

Offsite volunteer roles include working at our [Community Harvest farm](#) and assisting at special events.

Our Community Harvest Farm grows produce on over 7 acres of farmland and is located south of Stittsville. Annually, May through to October, [Community Harvest volunteers](#) assist with the growing cycle of approximately 20 kinds of produce that will be harvested and distributed to our community partners.

Special Events take place throughout the year and at various locations. [Special event volunteers](#) assist Ottawa Food Bank staff to food raise and fundraise as well as act as ambassadors for the Ottawa Food Bank by thanking donors and sharing general organizational information on the Ottawa Food Bank. Special events include food drives, parades, and more.



Health and Safety Information

The Ottawa Food Bank is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and secure work environment. Safety and security are shared responsibilities, and any potential safety hazard or security breach must be reported immediately. As a volunteer, you can refuse any work that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Any concerns should be brought to the Volunteer Coordinator and this information will be immediately forwarded to the Ottawa Food Bank's Joint Health and Safety Committee for review.

While Ottawa Food Bank staff provides supervision and direction for volunteer activities, volunteers must be able to follow directions, as well as health and safety protocols and work independently. Volunteers unable to volunteer independently must be supported by an accompanying adult who will aid during the volunteer shift.

Please ensure you review the [Manual Material Handling](#) which is found online under the Volunteer section of the Ottawa Food Bank website or ask for a printed copy from the Volunteer Coordinator.

Situational Safety Protocols

Warehouse

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information including being alert when equipment is being used and/or moving your work area
- Volunteers must stay in designated volunteer areas unless authorized otherwise by Ottawa Food Bank staff
- Volunteers must wear closed toed shoes. Open shoes or sandals are not permitted in the warehouse
- Volunteers are not permitted to use their cell phones/earphones in the warehouse. Please use your cell phone in the volunteer room

Farm

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information including direction in severe weather conditions
- Volunteers must stay in designated volunteer areas unless authorized otherwise by Ottawa Food Bank staff
- Volunteers must wear closed toe shoes suitable for working in all field conditions
- Volunteers must consider weather conditions and dress suitably
- Volunteers are encouraged to ensure they have sunscreen, bug spray, a hat, and a suitable amount of water to drink



Trucks

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information including being alert when equipment is used, or when the vehicle is in motion
- Volunteers must wear the high visibility vest provided by the Ottawa Food Bank or similar safety clothing
- Volunteer must wear sturdy closed toe footwear. Steel toes are recommended
- Volunteers are not permitted to enter the back of Ottawa Food Bank trucks
- Volunteers are not permitted to use equipment such as pallet jacks

Special Events

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information or emergency information pertinent to the event location
- Volunteers are not permitted to transport or count monetary donations without Ottawa Food Bank staff and if counted, this must take place in a secure location with an Ottawa Food Bank staff member

Emergency Procedures

The onsite environment of the Ottawa Food Bank is not commonly associated with danger or high risk, but accidents and injuries can occur, and health emergencies do arise. This possibility is also applicable to volunteering on our delivery trucks, volunteering offsite at special events or volunteering at our Community Harvest farm. **Do not hesitate to call 911 in an emergency.** Please ensure your Volunteer Supervisor is informed immediately of any emergency.

First aid kits can be found onsite at the Ottawa Food Bank in designated areas including the volunteer room, both sides of our warehouse and in the washroom of our reception area.

A first aid kit is also available at our Community Harvest farm and our special events team travels with a first aid kit as well.

Several Ottawa Food Bank employees are certified in First Aid and/or CPR. The list is posted by the first aid kits at the Ottawa Food Bank. Community Harvest farm staff are also First Aid and/or CPR certified. This list is updated as needed.

In case of fire, please follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff and exit the building immediately.

In case of a severe weather event at the farm or special event, please follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff or venue staff who will direct volunteers to a safe area.



Incident Reports

Volunteers hurt or injured while executing their volunteer duties are requested to complete an incident report. This report gathers information on the circumstances surrounding the injury and is shared the Ottawa Food Bank Joint Health and Safety Committee for evaluation and follow up.

Volunteers who witness an accident or injury could also be asked to complete an incident report.

Incident report forms can be found in any Ottawa Food Bank first aid kit or can be requested from the Volunteer Coordinator or any Ottawa Food Bank staff.

Questions? Concerns?

Please contact the Ottawa Food Bank Volunteer Coordinator:

volunteer@ottawafoodbank.ca

613-745-7001 extension 120

