

*Red Wiggler Community Farm Mission is to
Create fertile ground to nourish a healthy and inclusive community.*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Volunteer / Staff Relationships

Volunteers and staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and program of the agency. It is important for each partner to understand and respect the needs and abilities of the other. Our agency supports teamwork among the volunteers, staff, and clients.

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who, beyond the confines of paid employment, contributes time and service to assist. Red Wiggler in the accomplishment of its mission.

Volunteer and Staff Practices

Red Wiggler maintains a strong policy of equal employment and volunteer employment opportunity. Red Wiggler recruits, accepts, trains, promotes, and dismisses volunteers or staff on the basis of personal competence and job performance, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status or handicap.

Application Form

Potential volunteers and staff are required to complete an application for a position at Red Wiggler.

Interviewing

A staff member of Red Wiggler will interview all persons applying for a position. The prospective volunteer or staff member will have the opportunity to learn about the organization, its mission, and the specifics for the job. The interview will allow us to learn more about the applicant to determine if the applicant's interests and commitment are compatible with the mission for the farm.

Screening

We will check the references of all potential staff and volunteers. The staff or volunteers that will have direct contact with Red Wiggler "growers" may have to submit to a background check. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted by Red Wiggler. Under Maryland law, we must refuse applicants convicted of assault and battery or child abuse. All other convictions will be reviewed on an individual basis. We will also issue a driving record check and an auto insurance inquiry for anyone who will be driving for the agency.

Acceptance

Service of the volunteer or staff member will begin with the official acceptance of the volunteer by the staff. At the time the volunteer or staff member accepts the position, he/ she will complete the commitment form, personnel form and read and sign the Red Wiggler policies.

Training

All volunteers and staff will receive training about the organization and its mission, policies and procedures, and needed information concerning their job or jobs. Our staff will have the primary responsibility for the organization of the training materials, time and location of the training, and content of the training. The job coach will be responsible for the specific content of the training needed for those working directly with the growers. The field manager or the appropriate staffer will be responsible for the content needed for those working to support the farm. The program manager or appropriate farm representative will be responsible for the materials needed and training needed for the special education group of volunteers.

Probationary Period

All staff and volunteers must go through a 10-hour probationary period. Volunteers and or staff working with clients during this probationary period will work under close supervision. Staff and volunteers are required to complete their probation hours within the first month.

Supervision

Every staff member and volunteer will have an identified supervisor who will be responsible for the day to day support and direction

Right of Refusal

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

Feedback and Evaluation

Volunteers and staff will be asked to evaluate their experience at the farm concerning training, supervision, support, and value of their experience. This will be done through frequent informal dialog, a comment box, an exit interview, and/or a written evaluation.

Volunteers and staff's thoughts and ideas are important to make our program and goals of the farm a success.

Recognition

Volunteer service is very valuable Red Wiggler and we will recognize our volunteers informally and formally. The paid staff will also be acknowledged for their contributions to the farm.

Confidentiality

A system of records will be maintained on the volunteers and staff working with the RWF, including the application, commitment form, reference check, interview form, emergency information, dates of service, hours of service for volunteers, position held, duties performed and evaluation of work.

Volunteer, client, and staff records will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to the appropriate RWF representative. All requests for information about volunteers, clients, and staff **must** be through the appropriate RWCF staff member. ***This information will be considered confidential.***

Using the volunteers and staff list other than that for which it is intended (i.e.; for soliciting funds, business expansion of practice, etc. is never allowed.

Record of Volunteer Hours

Volunteers are responsible for signing the time sheets upon each visit and putting a completed time sheet in the appropriate notebook. This allows the RWCF to provide recognition for service. It also validates your time of service as work experience for future job references. You may obtain a form certifying your record of volunteer hours and letters of recommendation will be gladly written after 20 hours of quality service.

Facilities and Office Equipment

Volunteers and staff will park in the designated area discussed at training after the official acceptance of the staff member or volunteer. ***The RWCF volunteers are stewards of the farm and maintain a strict policy of respect and courtesy toward the owner and the tenants of the farm.***

The appropriate RWCF staff member must authorize use of the office equipment such as the fax, phone, and computer.

Volunteers and staff will have access to the equipment they need to perform their assigned duties.

Media Contact

Staff and volunteers may not speak to the media, as an official or unofficial spokesperson of the RWCF, without prior clearance from the executive director.

Absenteeism and Tardiness

Volunteers and staff members are expected to be reliable, punctual, and dependable. If the staff member or volunteer plans to be late for the scheduled time he / she must notify the appropriate RWCF supervisor. IF the lateness occurs more than two times, the RWCF supervisor will contact the volunteer or staff member and schedule a conference in an attempt to resolve the issue.

Discontinuation of Staff or Volunteer Services

A volunteer or staff member of the RWCF has the right to terminate his/ her service for any reason or no reason. The RWCF reserves the same right, for the rare occasion when a volunteer or staff member does not uphold performance standards or maintain an adequate record of attendance.

Exit Interview

If a volunteer or staff member wishes to leave his/ her service for any reason, she/he should contact the appropriate RWCF supervisor. This will allow the RWF to evaluate the staff member or volunteer's experience at the RWCF.

Dismissal

Volunteers and staff who fail to adhere to the policies of the RWCF and to satisfactorily perform their assignments may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer or staff member will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for dismissal with the appropriate RWCF

supervisor. There will be a written evaluation prior to the dismissal of a volunteer or staff member.

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 performing your assigned job, 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 and staff must adhere to the standards of conduct established by the RWCF to fulfill the mission of the RWCF.

Dignity

It is important to be sensitive at all times to the dignity of the clients who receive RWCF services. Not only does this mean speaking to them 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.

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 RWCF. The RWCF 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 well being. Please forward your concerns privately to the appropriate staff member.

Harassment Policy

Harassment is not only illegal, but it also creates uncomfortable conditions and unpleasant experiences for everyone. Harassment includes sexual, racial and otherwise hostile, intimidating, or offensive behaviors. ***It is the policy of the Red Wiggler 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 the appropriate staff member in an attempt to reach a resolution. It is the staff member's duty to listen to such complaints and to refer them the appropriate authority.

Grievance/Complaint Procedure

Grievances and /or complaints concerning the work environment should be reported promptly to the appropriate staff member. 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 restroom.

Personal Appearance

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

Eating

Everyone is expected to share in keeping facilities neat and clean and no personal food may be stored in the refrigerator for longer than 24 hours. Food may not be eaten from the fields without permission of Red Wiggler staff.

Honesty

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

Appropriate Language

Use of profane, foul, or abusive language is not permitted on the Red Wiggler property. We are a family oriented organization.

Smoking Policy

Red Wiggler is committed to the promotion of healthy lifestyles. In the spirit of that commitment, Red Wiggler 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 Red Wiggler activities and/or on Red Wiggler property. Implementing this policy ensures a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all volunteers, growers, and staff members.

Safety and Liability

*Red Wiggler Community Farm will do their best to provide safe conditions for their volunteers, clients, and staff. The Red Wiggler Community Farm counts on the volunteer, grower, and the staff member to be the best protector of his or her own personal safety. Employees 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!

Safety Concerns

Heat Stroke

At all times 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. RW suggests that all staff members, volunteers, and clients bring their own water.

Lymes Disease

Maryland is a high-risk state for Lymes disease. RW strongly encourages the use of tick repellent. There is a lymes disease vaccine that you may wish to discuss with your physician. RW urges you to use precautionary measures. Long pants are encouraged (in a cool fabric) to deter ticks and for field safety. Please conduct self-examination at the end of your workday.

Sun Safety

RW strongly encourages the use of sunscreen and hats and light colored clothing to reflect the sun's rays. The RWF encourages you to bring your own sunscreen. We will have sunscreen in their first aid kit.

Dress for Safety

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

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 maintained at all times. Only authorized staff members may operate motorized machinery unless the appropriate staff member gives proper authorization.

Abuse

At no time will a Red Wiggler grower, volunteer, and/or staff member 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 Maryland.
 - Sexual contact, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (f) of the Annotated Code of Maryland.
 - Intercourse, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (g) of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

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 Maryland Vocational Training Center or job coach. The behavioral procedure must conform to other appropriate Red Wiggler 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.

Incidents 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, client, or staff member, the appropriate staff member should be informed immediately. Incidents need to be documented on paper within 24 hours. There will be an incident form to fill out. Volunteers, growers, and staff members are covered by agency secured compensation insurance.

Legal Liability

As a volunteer or staff member 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 Red Wiggler Community Farm. In addition, you agree to release and discharge Red Wiggler 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, or staff member 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 upon the performance of their duties, they should consult with the appropriate Red Wiggler staff member.

Safeguarding Possession

Volunteers, staff, and clients are responsible for safeguarding their personal possessions while on the Red Wiggler Community Farm property.

Medical Release

In the event that an emergency should arise while working or volunteering at Red Wiggler requiring medical care or treatment, the 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 Maryland. Authorization is needed by the Red Wiggler Community Farm to absolve the Red Community Farm, nurses, physicians, and / or surgeons from any and all liability for their acts rendered in good faith.