

RED WIGGLER COMMUNITY FARM

CREATING FERTILE GROUND TO NOURISH A HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Volunteers at Red Wiggler

Red Wiggler depends on the support of hundreds of volunteers each year. 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. Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Red Wiggler Community Farm.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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 Practices

Red Wiggler maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer employment opportunity. Red Wiggler recruits, accepts, trains, promotes, and dismisses volunteers 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 are required to complete an application for a position at Red Wiggler.

Orientation/Interviewing

All volunteers must attend a 1-2 hour Volunteer Orientation. During this orientation, prospective volunteers will interact with a staff member of Red Wiggler and will have the opportunity to learn about the organization, its mission, and the specifics for the job. The interaction will allow us to learn more about the applicant to determine if the applicant's interests and commitment are compatible with the mission of the organization. All volunteer interns will be interviewed by phone and have an on farm interview/orientation as stated above.

Screening

We will check the references of all potential adult volunteers. Volunteers that will have direct contact with Red Wiggler "growers" and/or youth will be subject to a background check, to possibly include finger printing. 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. When your background check is complete, we will need 2 forms of identification, at least one must be a picture ID.

Acceptance

If a potential volunteer meets the needs of the organization and has been fully screened, service of the volunteer will begin with the official acceptance of the volunteer by the staff by phone, email, or in person.

Training

All volunteers 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. Given the seasonal nature of the work at Red Wiggler, task specific training will be done as applicable in the fields.

Probationary Period

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

Supervision

Every volunteer will have an identified supervisor who will be responsible for the day to day support and direction. In addition, volunteers will be made aware of who they can approach if they do not feel comfortable approaching their direct supervisor.

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 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.

Feedback and evaluations will be used to inform changes to our programs.

Recognition

Volunteer service is very valuable Red Wiggler and we will recognize our volunteers informally and formally. Awards will be given for both the number of hours served and any special projects completed. These awards will be announced during the season and also acknowledged at our Annual Harvest Celebration and Annual Report when appropriate.

Advancement

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to gain more responsibility within their role when appropriate. In addition, volunteers are welcome to apply for available employment opportunities when applicable.

Confidentiality

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

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

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 of service, validates time of service as work experience for future job references and provides RWCF with tracking data. Volunteers may obtain a form certifying their record of volunteer hours and letters of recommendation will be gladly written after 20 hours of quality service.

Facilities and Office Equipment

Volunteers will park in the designated area discussed at orientation after the official acceptance of the staff member. All equipment, facilities and grounds are expected to be treated with respect and well cared for by all volunteers. The appropriate RWCF 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 RWCF, without prior clearance from the Executive Director.

Absenteeism and Tardiness

Volunteers are expected to be reliable, punctual and dependable. If the volunteer plans to be late for the scheduled time, he/she must notify the appropriate RWCF supervisor. A volunteer may be terminated from their position due to continued absenteeism or tardiness.

Discontinuation of Staff or Volunteer Services

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

Exit Interview

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

Dismissal

Volunteers who fail to adhere to the policies of the RWCF or satisfactorily perform their assignments may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer 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 when appropriate.

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 must adhere to the standards of conduct established by 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 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 RWCF's 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 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, 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 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 his/her supervisor 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 the restroom.

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 are able to utilize the Murray Building 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 Red Wiggler 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 RWCF, and not using the Red Wiggler property, equipment, or facilities without authorization.

Appropriate Language

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

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. 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. 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!

Safety Concerns

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.

Lymes Disease

Maryland is a high-risk state for Lymes disease. RW 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

RWCF strongly encourages the use of sunscreen and hats and light colored clothing. RWCF 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 maintained at all times. Only authorized staff members may operate motorized machinery.

Abuse

At no time will a Red Wiggler 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 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 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.

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 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 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 Red Wiggler staff member.

Safeguarding Possession

Volunteers 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 volunteering at Red Wiggler 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 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.