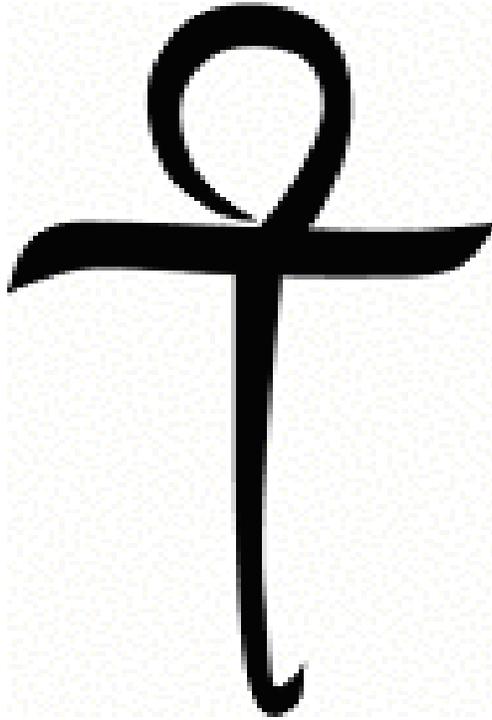


# The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland



## Volunteer Welcome Packet

Thank you for your service!

*12201 Euclid Ave • Cleveland, OH 44106 • (216) 721-4010 • [www.thefreeclinic.org](http://www.thefreeclinic.org)*

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# Overview

## *Mission Statement*

Our mission is to provide quality health care and related services free of charge to those who lack appropriate alternatives, and to advocate for policy changes that make health care available to all.

## *Principles Governing The Free Clinic*

- Health care is the right of every individual.
- Client services are provided in such a way as to preserve patient confidentiality and anonymity, as required.
- Clients are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility for their own health and well-being.
- The Free Clinic services are initiated and continued in response to prioritized unmet community need.
- The Free Clinic will utilize the minimum level of resources to provide the maximum level of care.
- The Free Clinic commits itself to secure sufficient funds to ensure its stable operation until its mission is fulfilled.
- Advocacy in support of The Free Clinic's mission is essential.

## *Our Philosophy*

The Free Clinic strongly supports the belief that health care is a right, not a privilege. Thus, The Free Clinic is committed to serving all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status, race, color, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status, or any other group protected by applicable federal and state laws. Persons or organizations referring patients for services or recommending The Free Clinic are advised to do so without regard to the potential clients' race, color, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status, or any other group protected by applicable federal and state laws. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Free Clinic will make reasonable accommodations for clients with special needs to access services. All of The Free Clinic's services are available to all clients without discrimination.

## *History of The Free Clinic*

The Free Clinic's history reflects a continual response to unmet community needs. When The Free Clinic opened its doors in a frame house on Cornell Road in 1970, it provided health care in a nonjudgmental manner to individuals outside of the mainstream. The Free Clinic adopted a mission of providing medical and mental health services to all who requested such care without regard to eligibility requirements and at no charge to the patient. Today, The Free Clinic has become an integral part of the safety net of care for the uninsured in our community.

The Free Clinic remained in its original location until it moved in 1975 to 12201 Euclid Avenue, thus becoming the eastern anchor to University Circle. Close to the East Cleveland border and the near Heights area, the change in location opened access to a more divergent population. The move, while of relatively short distance, provided a significant change in perception for the community at large, expanding access to a more representative cross-section of the medically underserved community. The significantly larger facility, coupled with increased levels of support, resulted in the expansion of core services and creation of many new programs. In 1979-80, The Free Clinic purchased the previously rented facilities and completed extensive renovations to make the buildings more suitable for its expanded services.

The Free Clinic's dramatic growth continued into the early 1980's. While community needs and program expenses grew, operational resources decreased. There followed several years of fiscal belt-tightening for the Clinic, with concentration returning to the core services of medical, dental, and mental health, and substance abuse treatment. By 1986, The Free Clinic not only maintained a balanced budget, but also retired its operational debt and was beginning to once again respond to emerging needs.

This pivotal move was most graphically evidenced in the creation of services for individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. In 1986, The Free Clinic established one of the first anonymous HIV testing programs in the Greater Cleveland area. In 1988, an outpatient treatment program combining medical and mental health services was established, the first non-hospital based program in the state. The evolution in HIV care continued in 1996 with the establishment of the first harm-reduction syringe exchange program in the state.

In the summer of 2001, faced with increasing patient volume and an outdated and rapidly decaying facility, The Free Clinic embarked on a major capital campaign for construction of a new building. On July 10, 2001, The Free Clinic broke ground on a new 34,000 square foot facility, right next door to the existing one. The new building opened its doors on June 24, 2002, commencing an exciting new chapter of The Free Clinic's legacy.

Today, The Free Clinic is a modern facility well equipped with 18 exam rooms, a pharmacy and laboratory, x-ray capabilities, five dental chairs, 12 mental health counseling rooms, and three substance abuse group counseling rooms. Designed to support the most efficient and effective means of service delivery, the layout also allows for expanded capacity in the years ahead. Since its construction in 2002, The Free Clinic has continued to fulfill its mission of providing quality health care services free of charge to the community. In the first year alone (2002-2003), the Clinic saw an astonishing 21% increase in service demand. The Free Clinic has consistently worked to meet this demand, employing only 57 paid staff members and relying heavily on its volunteers – nearly 300! – to uphold the commitment to the community.



# Why volunteer at The Free Clinic?

## *Volunteer Classifications & Roles*

The Free Clinic volunteer is anyone who, without expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of The Free Clinic. Volunteers of The Free Clinic consist of mature high school students, postsecondary students, graduate students, professional students and residents, licensed professionals (independently and dependently), and retired professionals. Mandated volunteers (court or institution referred) may also serve in a volunteer capacity. All volunteers will uphold the mission and philosophy of The Free Clinic by providing free, non-judgmental, high quality service to those in need of care.

## *Volunteer Benefits*

- Personalized Service: The Director of Volunteer Services works with applicable clinic staff and each volunteer to match his/her talents and skills with the appropriate volunteer position.
- Insurance: The Free Clinic extends general liability and malpractice insurance to its volunteers only when that care is provided on the premises of The Free Clinic. If a volunteer provider should elect to see a patient off site after first seeing the patient at The Free Clinic, the provider would be held liable for any contingencies and should carry his/her own general liability and malpractice coverage. It is the provider's responsibility to read his/her policy for exact coverage and wording in these instances. Volunteer service providers should read and sign the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Insurance.
- Helping Others: Volunteers have a unique opportunity to assist those who are in need of care, using personal life experiences, skills, and acquired knowledge and training. Involvement in this community health agency affords volunteers an integral opportunity to make an impact on the increased health and welfare of the Greater Cleveland community.
- Social and Professional Growth: Volunteering provides the opportunity to meet people, network socially and professionally, enhance one's resume, and make new friends. The Free Clinic's volunteer program offer incomparable exposure to patients and providers alike.
- Learn New Skills: Many volunteer positions require both classroom and on-the-job training that is provided by The Free Clinic free of charge. Volunteers can receive certificates of completion for the majority of the trainings offered.
- Leadership Development: The Associate Board is a group of young professionals who support The Free Clinic's mission by raising funds and awareness, and increasing volunteer involvement among 21 to 45 year olds. Their projects include the AIDS Walk, Microbrew, Fiesta, and other special events. The Free Clinic also has a Board of Trustees, responsible for approving policy directions and the annual operating budget, and implementing program initiatives. Members of this Board are elected to 3-year terms.

# Expectations of The Free Clinic

## *Orientation & Training*

All volunteers will receive orientation consisting of the following: (1) an overview of the Volunteer Welcome Packet; (2) a brief history and tour of The Free Clinic; and (3) an introduction to applicable staff. The Free Clinic is committed to providing service in a culturally sensitive manner and to providing all staff with training to aid them in serving the different cultures and lifestyles of our clients. Volunteers will undergo an in-house training and shadowing period alongside other experienced staff in order to gain support and comfort in handling assigned tasks. If at any time the volunteer's supervisor feels that the volunteer is unable to provide service at an acceptable level, the volunteer may be asked to undergo additional training. At the end of training, volunteers may be issued a Certificate of Completion. A volunteer should never hesitate to approach his/her supervisor with questions on any aspect of the job or Clinic operation.

## *Safety & Security*

The Free Clinic's security team works hard to ensure the safety of the staff and facilities, working closely with the City of Cleveland and University Circle Police Departments in order to provide prompt attention to all emergencies or disturbances. Volunteers are not permitted on the premises without supervision.

Please exercise good judgment in bringing personal items to the Clinic. Valuables left in your vehicle should be secured and out of sight. Security personnel will be happy to escort you to the parking lot after dark. In the event that there is a bio-hazardous spill, notify a supervisor and the maintenance staff will handle it properly. All telephones have a panic button, marked "x1999," to notify the front desk of an emergency. Follow posted signs for evacuation procedures. If you encounter any other facility problem, accident, or unsafe situation, it is imperative that you report it to either a volunteer supervisor immediately.

## *Timesheet Procedures*

It is imperative that volunteers record their hours each time they volunteer. The Free Clinic's ability to receive funding is often contingent upon the documentation of volunteer hours and the value of the volunteer program. These reports are also used to accurately track volunteers' hours for recognition and statistical purposes. ***Volunteers must thoroughly complete timesheets every month!!*** Timesheets for most volunteer roles are kept in the Volunteer Log Book at the front desk. Volunteer hours should be rounded to the nearest quarter hour in 15 minute increments ONLY (eg. record 3:15pm, not 3:09pm).

## *References / Proof of Service*

Responsible and dedicated volunteers are welcome to list The Free Clinic as a reference for a recommendation to school or other training programs. If a volunteer's supervisor is no longer at the Clinic, the reference will be based upon written documentation supplied by the volunteer and collected by the supervisor during the period of service. Volunteer supervisors reserve the right to deny a reference request if the volunteer has not fulfilled the minimum length of service, or if the supervisor has not had ample time to assess the volunteer's performance. In this case, only a verification of service dates can be supplied.

**Volunteers must be responsible for recording their hours in order to ensure that The Free Clinic maintains an accurate record of service.** It is the volunteer's responsibility to submit all requests for reference information to the director of volunteer services, including required forms and signed releases.

# Expectations of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to:

- Uphold the mission and philosophy of The Free Clinic.
- Treat all patients with the utmost respect and compassionate care.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Maintain professionalism at all times.
- Attend a volunteer orientation and meet all training requirements.

## ***Minimum Length of Service***

It takes a great deal of time and energy to effectively train volunteers. Thus, most positions at The Free Clinic request a minimum length of service which varies from three months to one year, depending upon the extent and depth of training. While long term service ensures consistency for the clients, we request that volunteers honestly evaluate their ability to commit prior to signing up for a role. Longevity is key – avoid “burnout” by making a sensible and realistic volunteer commitment.

## ***Dress Code & Identification***

The Free Clinic maintains a casual dress code to put patients at ease. A volunteer’s attire should be appropriate to the respective role s/he performs at The Free Clinic, and should not be a distraction to the services provided. It is important that all volunteers abide by basic standards of grooming and hygiene when serving in a professional organization. Volunteers should refrain from any style of dress that may be offensive to others, including (but not limited to) lewd designs, vulgar writing, low rise pants, overly worn/frayed jeans, cleavage-bearing tops, and short skirts. Scrubs are permissible. Shorts and flip flops are not. Closed toed shoes are required in the medical, dental, and HIV services departments at all times.

Volunteers must be properly identified with name badges while serving. This allows access to staff lounges and other restricted areas of the Clinic.

## ***Attendance***

Because The Free Clinic runs on volunteers, the ability to provide quality service greatly depends on volunteer attendance. It is imperative that volunteers fulfill their commitments and arrive on time when scheduled, so as not to compromise client care.

The Free Clinic recognizes that unforeseen conflicts may arise. In the event of illness, car trouble, weather complications, vacation, etc, volunteers should convey their scheduling changes as soon as possible by calling the volunteer supervisor directly or leaving a message at the front desk: **(216) 721-4010**. Advanced notice would be greatly appreciated, as the Clinic relies heavily on volunteer attendance for optimal service delivery.

## ***Accepting and Offering Feedback***

Volunteer supervisors and coworkers may offer constructive criticism to volunteers. This is designed to improve the quality of the volunteer’s performance in the position and, ultimately, to ensure the highest level of care for the clients. Feedback is constructive and intended with the clients’ best interests in mind. Volunteers should accept feedback, yet they are also encouraged to voice any concerns or confusion at any time.

Finally, and most importantly, each volunteer should know his/her limits. At no time should a volunteer perform any function which s/he does not feel competent to perform. If a volunteer is not comfortable with any aspect of his/her job or is unsure of the service description, s/he is encouraged to ask the volunteer supervisor for more clarification and/or additional training.

## Volunteer Policies

### *Confidentiality*

The Free Clinic believes passionately in protecting its clients' rights to privacy. Volunteers and staff shall respect the confidentiality of all internal information and any clients whom s/he may see or assist while here at The Free Clinic. No volunteer or staff member shall discuss any confidential information regarding the clinic, including its clients, personnel, and activities, outside of what is required on the job. Doing so may result in immediate dismissal. Volunteers are encouraged to consult their supervisor if they are not clear about the limits and/or the importance of abiding by this confidentiality policy.

### *Smoking & Use of Alcohol or Drugs*

The Free Clinic is a non-smoking campus. To maintain a safe and comfortable working environment and to ensure compliance with applicable laws, smoking on the grounds of the facilities is strictly prohibited. Smoking is permitted in the parking lot, when out of "wind range" of the entry doors. Volunteers are not permitted to use alcohol or any drugs not prescribed for a medical condition on Clinic time, nor may volunteers expect to provide services of any kind while under the influence.

### *Solicitation & Literature Distribution*

In the interest of maintaining a proper business environment and preventing interference with work and inconvenience to others, we expect volunteers and patients, to refrain from distributing literature or printed materials of any kind, selling merchandise, soliciting financial contributions, or soliciting for any other cause while on The Free Clinic's property. This applies to non-work related interests, pursuits, causes, religious institutions, charities, disaster relief, political parties and candidates, or commercial ventures except where such activities are approved or endorsed in advance by Human Resources. The only exception to this policy applies to agency-sponsored events. This policy also applies to volunteers who are not on duty. Violators of this policy are subject to corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

### *Sexual Harassment & Other Forms of Harassment*

The Free Clinic is committed to providing a work environment which is free from any form of physical, sexual, or verbal harassment or intimidation by other staff or volunteers. Sexual harassment, as in unwelcome advances, innuendoes, physical or verbal abuse, will not be tolerated by The Free Clinic. If someone suspects that s/he has witnessed or been the subject of any form of harassment, **it must be reported immediately** to a supervisor or the director of volunteer services. Every member of the staff – paid or volunteer – has the right to safety and comfort, and The Free Clinic will strive to maintain a work environment where open communication will be valued and encouraged. It is viewed as a responsibility of all members of the volunteer staff to address and report such concerns directly and appropriately.

### *Media Contact*

To ensure that The Free Clinic is delivering a consistent message, volunteers are not to respond to inquiries from or offer opinions to the news media (newspapers, television stations, etc). If a member of the media approaches, simply let them know that you are not authorized to speak on behalf of the organization and please direct them to the Executive Director, Director of Volunteer & External Relations, or another staff member. This will ensure that all statements to the media are accurate and in line with The Free Clinic's policies.

### ***No Weapons***

The Free Clinic prohibits any type of weapons (ie. guns, handguns, firearms, knives, etc.) on The Free Clinic's property, including parking lots and company owned vehicles. Any volunteer who has been found, after appropriate investigation, in violation of this policy will be dismissed from his/her assignment.

### ***Corrective Action Plan***

To maintain an orderly, safe and efficient work environment, The Free Clinic reserves the right to take corrective action in response to inappropriate volunteer conduct. It is the Clinic's intent to respond appropriately with regard to aggravating or mitigating factors. Circumstances justifying corrective action include, but are not limited to, the following: Fighting; Obscene or abusive language or gestures; Possessing firearms, knives, or other weapons on The Free Clinic's premises; Theft; Tampering with client records; Unauthorized use of Clinic equipment, supplies, or other property; Excessive absenteeism or tardiness; Poor work performance; Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during scheduled work hours; and Violation of The Free Clinic's policies or guidelines. Corrective action may include reassignment, retraining, referral to more suitable volunteer options in other departments, or dismissal. A volunteer must return all company property before leaving The Free Clinic.

### ***Exit Interviews***

Exit interviews with the director of volunteer services are normally scheduled for departing volunteers. The purposes of the exit interview are to briefly review the volunteer's service and hours, complete a Volunteer Exit Survey, collect all Clinic property that may be in the volunteer's possession, and provide volunteers with an opportunity to discuss their job-related experiences and offer suggestions.

It's important that volunteers properly terminate their service by completing the exit interview process so that the Clinic may maintain accurate records of current volunteers. **Please do not discontinue service without first notifying the director of volunteer services.**

### ***Grievances***

Volunteers should direct all immediate concerns to the volunteer supervisor. It is important that the volunteer services department is informed of any volunteer concerns, comments, or complaints regarding the volunteer supervisor, staff, or other volunteers. Positive feedback is welcomed, too!