



## Welcome to Neighbors!

Volunteers are an essential part of our mission, vision and values. Volunteers expand our reach providing opportunities for our neighbors to thrive. Thank you for choosing to spend time with us. This handbook contains important information and directions.

Volunteers have been an integral part of Neighbors from its beginning. In 1972 Neighbors was founded in response to an economic crisis in South Saint Paul. The closure of the stockyards upset the economy of the entire city. Eighteen volunteers from six local churches created Neighbors, Inc. While we have grown, we stayed true to our roots. Volunteers remain an involved and meaningful part of our mission.

### Mission:

Providing opportunities for our neighbors to thrive by connecting volunteers to people in need.

### Core Values:

Respect • Generosity • Inclusion

## Who We Are

Our goal is to provide respectful, inclusive and affirming experiences. To achieve this, we apply the following principles:

- **Respect**
  - We cooperate with policies and procedures.
  - We practice boundaries when we interact with clients.
  - We are patient while learning, teaching and assisting.
- **Kindness**
  - We treat all people with dignity; no exceptions.
  - We refrain from gossip and mean-spirited comments.
  - When we have concerns or disagreements, we assume good intentions and look for solutions openly.
- **Safety**
  - We are part of a harassment and violence free culture.
  - We respect our drug and alcohol-free environment.
  - We keep guns and other dangerous items off the premises.
  - We stay home when we are sick.

## Becoming a Volunteer

**Application:** Interested individuals may apply via Neighbors' website <https://www.neighborsmn.org/volunteer/>

**Review:** Staff will review your information and complete a basic background check. We will reach out to you when your review is complete.

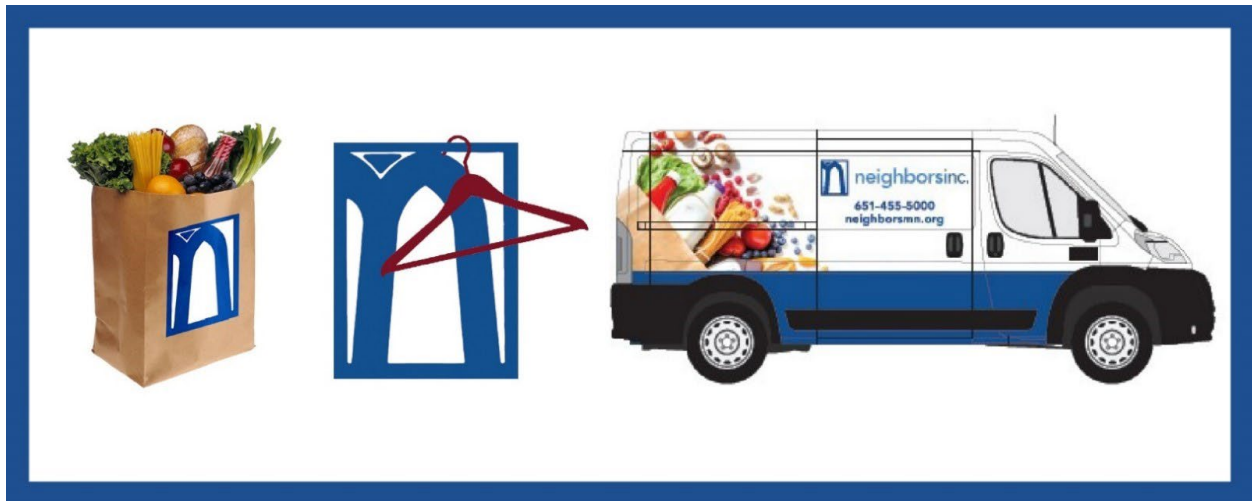
- **Applicants with a History of Criminal Incidents:** For those who want to volunteer and have incidents of criminal activity in their past, we ask for at least a three-year period without infractions. After three years, applicants may be considered with additional screening and an interview with the Community Engagement Coordinator. Verification of full restitution and letters of reference may be required.
- **Third Party Mandated Service:** Neighbors, Inc. is not equipped to assist people meeting court ordered conditions of probation, restorative justice or community service.

**Next Steps:** We want you to feel ready for your first shift. Reviewing the handbook is the first step. If you have any questions about the handbook, please reach out to [volunteer@neighborsmn.org](mailto:volunteer@neighborsmn.org).

**Orientation:** New volunteer orientations are held on a regular basis. At the orientation, you will learn about all of the current volunteer opportunities at Neighbors, how to schedule shifts through our volunteer portal and will be given a tour of our facilities.

**First Shift:** A staff person will greet you upon arrival. You'll be given training for the tasks of the day. We will continue to provide ongoing support during your time at Neighbors.

**Checking In:** Staff will check in with you regularly to make sure you feel supported and are enjoying volunteering.



### **On Site Volunteering:**

Most of our volunteers serve at Neighbors through onsite opportunities.

- Clothes Closet Thrift Store – Help with receiving donations, preparing items for the sales floor, assisting customers or as a cashier. Visit them at: [neighborsclothescloset.org](http://neighborsclothescloset.org).
- Food Shelf – Help process donations, stock our food shelf or assist with packing orders.
- Holiday Gift Program (Seasonal) – Greet guests and donors and assist with distribution of gifts.
- On Site Mission Boosters – Meet the expressed needs of staff when they come up through onsite projects.

### **Driving:**

- Donation Pickup – Transport food drive donations from the community to Neighbors.
- Essentials Delivery – Pickup food shelf orders at Neighbors to deliver to community members in need.
- Food Distribution – Assist with transporting food to our satellite Express locations
- Food Rescue – Pickup food donations from partnering grocery stores and bring to Neighbors.

### **In the Community:**

- Events – Participate in off and on-site events (Parades, Duck Races, bagging at local grocery stores and more).
- Mission Boosters – Pick up Projects at Neighbors and complete offsite to return when finished.
- Church Representatives – Communicate the work of Neighbors with your congregation.
- Board of Directors – Volunteers who meet regularly and help lead the mission of Neighbors.

### **Youth Volunteers:**

- Youth over the age of 14 manage their schedules and serve in a variety of areas throughout the building.
- Youth 13 and under should contact the Volunteer Coordinator about available opportunities.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit: [www.neighborsmn.org/volunteer](http://www.neighborsmn.org/volunteer)

## Holiday Schedule

- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Week of Independence Day (dates will vary)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Neighbors may close in the event of severe weather. We post closure information on Facebook, on our website and contact scheduled volunteers.

We want you to feel and be safe. If you do not feel comfortable traveling due to weather conditions, please stay home and inform your program supervisor.

## Representing Neighbors

### Speaking with the Media

Please direct all questions from members of the media to the Community Engagement Director. Volunteers are asked not to speak to reporters on behalf of the organization. If a reporter would like to interview you about your volunteer experience, please connect with the Community Engagement Director who can help you prepare and ensure consistent messaging. For more information, contact Heidi Satre at: [heidi@neighborsmn.org](mailto:heidi@neighborsmn.org) or call her at 651-306-2154.

### Social Media

Social media is a great tool and one that we utilize often to help spread the word about the work Neighbors does in our community. We encourage volunteers to like and/or follow our pages/accounts and share the information you see there, and/or share generalities of their experiences with the organization. However, it is vital that we protect our clients' confidentiality on these platforms as well. Please ensure that client-specific details and information are not included in anything you post, including text, images, videos, etc. If you have questions, please talk with Neighbors' Community Engagement Director.



[facebook.com/NeighborsInc](https://facebook.com/NeighborsInc)  
[facebook.com/NeighborsClothesClosetThriftStore](https://facebook.com/NeighborsClothesClosetThriftStore)



[@NeighborsInc](https://twitter.com/NeighborsInc)



[@neighborsinc](https://instagram.com/neighborsinc)  
[@ccthriftstore](https://instagram.com/ccthriftstore)

### Media Release Form

Neighbors, Inc. may capture written testimonials, still images, video and/or audio recordings of volunteers while they are volunteering or representing Neighbors to be used for promotional, celebratory or fundraising purposes. It is standard practice for a Neighbors representative to ask permission before capturing media items, however, there are instances where an image could be captured unbeknownst to the volunteer. As a volunteer, you are agreeing to authorize

Neighbors to use, reuse, copy, publish, display, exhibit, reproduce and distribute media items in organizational materials without advance notification and are participating on a voluntary basis with the understanding that no payment or other compensation from Neighbors will be exchanged.

## Further Partnership

Many of our volunteers choose to support us financially. Whether that is \$5 at Christmas or planned estate giving, we are grateful and conscientious stewards of your gifts. Please stop in and speak with Scott Andrews, our Development Officer, if you have questions or would like to learn more. You can also contact him at 651-306-2148 or email: [scott@neighborsmn.org](mailto:scott@neighborsmn.org).

### Financial Gifts:

- Make a one-time gift. If you decide to become a donor you can donate in person, by mail or by [donating online](http://www.neighborsmn.org/donate) ([www.neighborsmn.org/donate](http://www.neighborsmn.org/donate)) with a credit or debit card. Online donations are administered through iDonate.com. Your personal information is secure.
- Become a part of the Neighbors' *Community Builder's Circle*. You can do this by making a recurring gift. This is possible through direct mail, workplace giving options or online through our web site.
- Check for employer matching gifts and make your donation go further! Your employer may participate in providing matching gifts for charitable organizations.
- Facilitate a Sponsorship. If you work for, or know of a business or individual who would be willing to sponsor one of our events we would love to hear from you.
- Become a part of the *Spirit of Neighbors Circle* by remembering Neighbors, Inc. in your estate plans. These gifts could include stocks, bequests, memorials or other planned gifts. They help build a personal legacy and will leave your mark on Neighbors, Inc. for years to come.

## Policies and Procedures at Neighbors

Neighbors, Inc. has policies, procedures, and values in place to ensure that the best service is provided to clients and to protect our clients, volunteers, staff and organization as a whole.

### Clothes Closet Thrift Store Shopping Policy

The Clothes Closet Thrift Store is generously supported by donations of new and gently used items. Items donated to the CCTS are Neighbors, Inc. Property. All staff decisions regarding these items are final.

Volunteers and staff may shop in the CCTS during regular store hours on their days off or before and after their shifts. Anything that has been marked and placed on the sales floor is available for purchase.

Please contact the Clothes Closet Thrift Store Manager with any questions or concerns.

### **Food Policy**

Volunteers and staff may not be given or take food from the food shelf without permission from a supervisor.

Neighbors' staff have been instructed to discard any food that shows signs of potential contamination, adulteration, or is otherwise considered unsafe. To protect clients from harm as well as to protect our programs from potential liability, no one is permitted to use, distribute, or consume discarded product.

Volunteers and staff can schedule a food shelf order if they meet Neighbors' income eligibility requirements. Please call 651-455-5000 to request assistance.

### **Independent Volunteering**

If a volunteer is able to adhere to policies/assigned tasks of Neighbors independently, then that volunteer may sign up for shifts independently. However, if a volunteer needs assistance completing their assigned tasks, they may bring an aid, family member or other direct support staff with them to assist. All persons assisting a volunteer must complete a volunteer application and adhere to the policies in our volunteer handbook. Similarly, if circumstances change for an existing volunteer, Neighbors staff may require that the volunteer signs up for shifts with a support person.

### **Boundary Policy**

Boundaries are imaginary lines that help us be fair, kind, respectful, and safe. As a team member at Neighbors, we have a collective set of boundaries.

For your protection and the reputation of our organization, there are situations that cannot under any circumstances occur. These situations may include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment, abuse or mistreatment of staff, volunteers, or program participants
- Breach of confidentiality
- Unprofessional relationships with clients

When we adhere to our boundaries, we are able to build and strengthen our reputation in the community, care for our guests, and alleviate some guilt associated with saying "no" to a request.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

While rare, Neighbors recognizes that there may be situations involving volunteers that require disciplinary action and wants to ensure that they are dealt with fairly and consistently. The following are the actions that will be taken when problems occur:

1) Informal discussion: Program managers will make every effort to resolve problems with informal discussions, which may include additional support for the volunteer. This is not considered disciplinary action.

2) Verbal warning: If, despite informal discussions a volunteer's conduct still does not meet acceptable standards, the volunteer will be given a formal verbal warning by the program manager and the volunteer coordinator. The volunteer will be told the reason for the warning, what the volunteer needs to do to improve the situation, and that the verbal warning is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure. A note about the warning will be made in the volunteer's file.

3) Written warning: If there is no improvement in conduct after a verbal warning, or if a further offence occurs, the volunteer will be asked to attend a meeting with the program manager and the volunteer coordinator, and will be given a formal written warning. The letter will contain details of the concern, the reasons why the behavior is unacceptable, and a statement that failure to change conduct will result in dismissal. The executive director will be alerted that a written warning has been issued, and a copy of the warning will be kept on electronic file.

4) Dismissal: If the volunteer's conduct still fails to improve, or if further serious misconduct occurs, the volunteer will be dismissed. The decision to dismiss will be made by the volunteer coordinator, in conjunction with the program manager and the executive director. Upon decision to dismiss, the CEO will sign and send the volunteer a Letter of Separation.

5) Immediate Action: When a volunteer's action is found to be gross misconduct, that volunteer will normally be subject to immediate dismissal and the above procedures regarding progression of warnings will not apply.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What should I wear?***

Wear comfortable clothing. Close toed shoes are required in the food shelf and warehouse. To help us build community, please wear your name tag lanyard during your shifts.

### ***What if I need accommodations?***

Neighbors, Inc. works with volunteers to ensure a safe and inclusive environment. If a volunteer needs assistance completing their assigned tasks, they may bring an aide, family member or other direct support staff to assist them. All persons assisting a volunteer must complete a volunteer application and adhere to the policies in our volunteer handbook.

We are 100% committed to working with our volunteers who request accommodations. Please inform a staff member of any needs. We will work as a team to find solutions.

### ***What if I am unable to make my shift?***

Emergencies come up and plans change. Please update your availability on the Volunteer Portal as soon as possible. For same day cancelations, please alert your program supervisor as soon as possible. Phone numbers and email addresses can be found in this Handbook and on the Home Page of the Volunteer Portal.

### ***What should I do when I see someone I know getting help?***

Someone you know might need help from Neighbors. Treat them like everyone else without drawing attention to your relationship.

### ***What should I do if I have a question?***

All staff members welcome and value your questions. You can also access our [Compliments and Concerns form](#) ([www.neighborsmn.org/volunteer-feedback](http://www.neighborsmn.org/volunteer-feedback)) which is available as an online suggestion box.

### ***Can I buy things from the Clothes Closet Thrift Store?***

Absolutely! Most volunteers and staff have had fun bargain hunting in the store. Anything that has been marked and placed on the sales floor is available for purchase. You may shop during regular store hours, before or after your shift or on your day off.

### ***What if I need help from Neighbors?***

We are here to help if you need us. Feel free to reach out to [susan@neighborsmn.org](mailto:susan@neighborsmn.org) or call 651-306-2141. Your inquiry will be confidential.





<b>Trent Homard</b>	Volunteer Manager	<a href="mailto:volunteer@neighborsmn.org">volunteer@neighborsmn.org</a> 651-272-1133
<b>Jenny Sanford</b>	Financial Empowerment Program Manager	<a href="mailto:jenny@neighborsmn.org">jenny@neighborsmn.org</a> 651-282-0203
<b>Erin Roeske</b>	Hunger Programs Manager	<a href="mailto:foodshelf@neighborsmn.org">foodshelf@neighborsmn.org</a> 651-306-2150
<b>Yudi Montes</b>	Clothes Closet Thrift Store Manager	<a href="mailto:yudi@neighborsmn.org">yudi@neighborsmn.org</a> 651-455-0447
<b>Cody Semo</b>	Marketing and Community Events Coordinator	<a href="mailto:cody@neighborsmn.org">cody@neighborsmn.org</a> 651-306-2149
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<b>Susan Schroeder</b>	Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:susan@neighborsmn.org">susan@neighborsmn.org</a> 651-306-2141

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