



**BRIDGING**

WE FURNISH HOMES WITH HOPE®

# Volunteer Handbook

Bridging empowers people to thrive in their homes by providing quality furniture and household goods for those pursuing housing stability.



## Welcome to the Bridging Team

We are excited to have you as a volunteer at Bridging. We want your experience to be the best it can be. We hope your time here will be not only rewarding but also filled with joy knowing that you are making a difference in our community. Welcome to the Bridging team!

## Bridging's Mission, Vision, Values

**Mission Statement:** Bridging empowers people to thrive in their homes by providing quality furniture and household goods for those pursuing housing stability.

**Vision Statement:** Everyone lives in a furnished home.

### Values:

**Dignity:** We recognize the inherent dignity of all. We demonstrate respect through our efforts to understand each individual and treating each person as they wish to be treated. We work to bring out the best in everyone through our efforts to advance the mission of Bridging and do good in our community.

**Service:** We believe in being in the service of others and commit ourselves to using our talents and passions to support each other.

**Partnership:** We foster strong and deep partnerships, working together to support those we serve. We actively work to use the strengths of all partners for the advancement of our work in the community. Our partnerships support our ability to effectively deliver the benefits of Bridging.

**Stewardship:** We are committed and responsible stewards of the resources that are utilized to deliver our mission. We hold ourselves to high standards of responsible use of financial, environmental and people resources.

**Excellence:** We strive to achieve excellence in all we do, committing ourselves to deliver outstanding experiences for all. We allow space for learning and growth in order to realize our fullest potential now and in the future.

**Gratitude:** We demonstrate genuine appreciation for the opportunity to do the work we do and for all we receive. We regularly recognize and celebrate the contributions and impact of individuals and groups in advancing the mission of Bridging.

### Bridging's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Statement

At Bridging, we value unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, ensuring that everyone – clients, volunteers, staff, board, donors, agency and community partners – feel that they are welcome and are a part of the Bridging community. We value the dignity and inclusion of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, abilities, sexual orientation, life experiences or any other identities, and seek to learn and celebrate differences. We believe that creating an inclusive environment based on respect, trust, and service are integral to how we serve clients, support the team, and achieve our mission.

Bridging recognizes that we have a responsibility to center equity in our work. Therefore, Bridging strives to make our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging evident in our environment, policies, processes, staff, and volunteers. In order to integrate these crucial competencies throughout our organization's culture, we commit to the following:

- Fostering an environment that supports, engages and includes people with different racial, cultural, economic, ages and religious backgrounds as well as those with varying physical abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations.
- Diversifying and tapping into partnerships beyond traditional allies and constituencies.
- Entering intercultural relationships with humility, prepared to listen, learn, follow their lead, and adapt our methods and practices to achieve mutual benefit.
- Recruiting, hiring, retaining, and developing a culturally competent team whose demographics more closely mirror those of our Twin Cities community.
- Ensuring Bridging policies and procedures are welcoming and do not further inequities.

## Bridging Team Philosophy

We are committed to providing the best possible climate for maximum development and goal achievement for all Bridging team members (staff/volunteers). Our practice is to treat each team member as an individual. We seek to develop a spirit of teamwork with individuals working together to attain a common goal. We firmly believe that with direct communication, we can continue to resolve any difficulties that may arise and develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

## Importance of Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to Bridging's daily operations and success. In 2023, 660 individual volunteers donated over 60,000 hours to Bridging! Volunteers bring energy, creativity, and passion to help us serve approximately 5,000 households each year. We are dependent on volunteers like YOU to continue serving our community.

## Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

- Work in a healthy and safe environment
- Be provided with orientation to Bridging and your volunteer role
- Be provided with policies/procedures and appropriate training to carry out your role
- Have your personal information kept confidential
- Be provided with ongoing support and supervision from staff
- Be treated with dignity and respect by Bridging staff, donors, clients and other volunteers
- Be heard, acknowledged and well supported

As a volunteer, you have the responsibility to:

- Attend orientation and training sessions as provided
- Notify the volunteer coordinator/manager if you are unable to attend your scheduled shift
- Complete the volunteer log to keep a record of hours served
- Provide emergency contact information and keep the information current
- Dress appropriately and wear close-toed shoes on Bridging trucks or in the warehouse
- Accept the leadership of staff supervisors

- Maintain ongoing and open communication with staff regarding your needs and concerns as a volunteer
- Abide by Bridging policies and procedures, many of which are outlined below

## Bridging Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures apply to all Bridging team members (staff/volunteers).

### **Children in the Warehouse**

Children are not allowed in the warehouse. Volunteers must be 14 years of age or older to volunteer at Bridging.

### **Confidentiality of Client and Agency Matters**

Our professional ethics require that we maintain the highest degree of confidentiality when handling clients and agency matters. To maintain this professional confidence, Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) should not disclose client and agency information to other clients and agencies, friends, or members of one's own family.

### **Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Harassment**

Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) are expected to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment in their time at Bridging. ***Bridging prohibits harassment for any reason*** based upon an individual's race (including traits associated with race, such as hair texture and hair styles such as braids, locs, and twists), color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, veteran status, genetic information, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, membership or activity in a local commission, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

If you feel that you are being subjected to (or witness) possible sexual harassment, other unlawful harassment or discrimination, inappropriate conduct or retaliation, you have the right to immediately demand that the person stop at once. If you feel comfortable doing so, you should promptly tell the individual to stop and report the conduct to the volunteer coordinator/manager, and they will see that the conduct is stopped and not repeated. If the volunteer coordinator/manager is the harasser, however, you do not need to report the conduct to them but then you must report it to the Director of Human Resources.

You should report any actions that you believe may violate our policy no matter how slight the actions may seem. All allegations will be promptly and objectively investigated

by the Bridging leadership team. Bridging will keep any report of alleged harassment, discrimination or inappropriate conduct as confidential as possible. However, the organization may need to disclose certain information on a business need-to-know basis, including in connection with an investigation into a complaint, or as otherwise required by law.

### **Donations/Bridging Property**

Clients and serving our mission are our top priority at Bridging. Items donated to Bridging are for the exclusive benefit of our clients and households served.

- No items may be removed from the buildings by any Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) without a written authorization from a staff member. Removal of any Bridging property from the warehouse without proper approval may be cause for termination.
- Bridging does not sell donated items to the public, volunteers or staff.
- We only accept items on our Donate Your Stuff list that meet our quality standards. New items solicited for our fundraising events (ex. Gala) are exempt from this policy.

### **Drug, Cannabis, Alcohol and Tobacco Use**

Bridging's goal is to establish and maintain a healthy and efficient work force free from the effects of drugs, cannabis and alcohol abuse. Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) may not manufacture, use, possess, sell, transfer or dispense, or distribute cannabis, drugs or alcohol while working/volunteering or while on Bridging's premises or property, while conducting organization business, or while using or operating vehicles, equipment, or machinery owned by Bridging.

Tobacco use, including both smoke and smokeless tobacco, as well as any other smoking device, is not allowed inside of a Bridging building, in a Bridging truck, or while driving a Bridging truck/vehicle.

### **Injuries and Accidents**

While it is uncommon, occasionally Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) may experience a major accident, injury, illness or episode at Bridging which requires more than a first aid kit. If an event occurs, we will follow the procedure below.

Procedure:

1. The first staff member to become aware of an incident should call 9-1-1.

2. Bridging is not in a position to determine whether an accident, illness or episode is life-threatening, even if the Bridging team member (staff/volunteer) appears to have recovered and or the individual insists they are okay.
3. If there is any question about what to do, Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) should immediately seek out a supervisor or manager for immediate response and action.
4. Bridging will call your emergency contact.
5. Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) will notify the volunteer manager/coordinator if they are not present when the incident occurs.
6. A first report of injury will be completed by a staff member and provided to the volunteer manager/coordinator, Director of Programs and Services, and the Director of Human Resources.
7. NOTE: Bridging has an AED located in the Bloomington and Roseville warehouses.

Additionally, volunteers are *not* covered by workers' compensation insurance (medical coverage or loss of wages) for injury that may occur while they are volunteering.

### **Name Tags**

You will be issued a permanent name tag within two weeks of your start date. Pronouns added upon request. It, or a temporary name tag, must be worn while you are volunteering. A Bridging apron with your name embroidered on it is an acceptable substitute for a name tag.

### **Pet Policy**

Service animals (dogs and miniature horses) are welcome at Bridging.

- Staff/volunteers may only ask the following questions:
  - Is the animal required because of a disability?
  - What work or task the animal has been trained to perform?
- Staff/volunteers may NOT:
  - Ask about the person's disability or require documentation of the disability;
  - Ask or require that special identification cards for the service animal be produced;
  - Ask or require that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform work;
  - Ask about the training that the service animal received; or
  - Require individuals with a service animal to use a specific entrance.
- Service animals may be asked to leave if they are not under the control of the handler or are not housebroken.

Bridging recognizes that personal pets bring many great benefits for those that own them, however, generally we discourage Bridging team members (staff/volunteers) from bringing pets into the workplace during working/volunteering hours. If there is a specific need for a pet to be brought into the workplace, please reach out to the volunteer manager/coordinator for discussion.

### **Recycling and Waste Prevention**

Bridging is committed to the environment and its future. Therefore, recycling containers are located throughout the building for the collection of recyclable materials. Waste of time, materials and utilities is costly to the organization. If you have any waste prevention ideas, please let the volunteer manager/coordinator know.

### **Weapons**

Possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms or explosives on work premises, while operating organization machinery, equipment or vehicles for work-related purposes or while engaged in organization business off premises is forbidden except where expressly authorized by the organization and permitted by state and local laws. This policy applies to all Bridging team members (staff/volunteers), including but not limited to, those who have a valid permit to carry a firearm. This policy does not apply to firearms stored in a Bridging team member's (staff/volunteers) locked motor vehicle.

### **Questions and Concerns**

If you have questions or become aware of a situation that you feel may be a violation of our policies, you should bring it to the attention of the volunteer coordinator/manager or the Director of Human Resources.

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## Acknowledgement

By signing this, I indicate that I have read, understand and agree to uphold and abide by the outlined values, responsibilities, and policies. I agree that failure to do so may be grounds for disqualification or removal.

All volunteers 14-17 years of age are required to have this signed by their parent or guardian.

Return the signed copy of the acknowledgement page to the volunteer coordinator/manager. Please keep the handbook contents for your records.

PRINTED NAME OF VOLUNTEER: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME PARENT/GUARDIAN (if volunteer is 14-17 years of age):

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER OR PARENT/GUARDIAN:

\_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION (please circle): ROSEVILLE OR BLOOMINGTON

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_