

VOLUNTEER YOUTH ALLIANCE

Handbook



Welcome!

Dear Valued Student,

Welcome to Volunteer Youth Alliance (also known as VYA)! We are delighted that you have chosen to volunteer your time with us. We understand that your time is precious and we are honored that you are willing to spend some of it with us. Each and every day our team depends on volunteers like you to ensure that we operate efficiently and successfully and make the biggest impact possible. Volunteers at VYA do a variety of duties that make a difference in Box Butte County. In short, Volunteer Youth Alliance would not exist without dedicated volunteers like you.

This Volunteer Handbook provides answers to many of the questions you may have about the volunteer programs we offer. It covers policies and procedures along with our mutual responsibilities. You are responsible for reading and understanding the Volunteer Handbook and for adhering to Volunteer Youth Alliance policies and procedures. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with a supervisor or the RSVP Director.

Again, on behalf Volunteer Youth Alliance, we welcome you to our volunteer program. Thank you for taking time to help us unify our community and make a great impact in the Box Butte County.

Sincerely,

Angie Flesner
RSVP Director

About Volunteer Youth Alliance

Volunteer Youth Alliance was organized in 2024 to unite youth and seniors who volunteer their time towards building a healthy Box Butte County. We support junior and senior high school students who are looking to use their time, energy and talents to give back to the community. With community leaders, youth learn leadership, business skills and relationship building. They are supported to reimagine passions, make healthy lifestyle choices and pursue academic excellence. As a volunteer for VYA, you're contributing toward "building the best hometown in America".

Our Mission

Volunteer Youth Alliance engages young students in cross-generational and cross-cultural service experiences that enhance their life and work skills while benefiting the community and inspiring a lifetime ethic of volunteerism, leadership and service.

Our Vision

The vision of Volunteer Youth Alliance is to create an engaged community through volunteer action that supports our five fundamental goals:

1. Engage youth in compatible volunteer service that is both rewarding and educational.
2. Encourage cross-generational and cross-cultural working relationships.
3. Improve overall scholastic performance and scholarship opportunities for youth.
4. Promote a lifetime ethic of leadership and volunteerism in future adults.
5. Enhance the community and the lives of its residents.

Our Name

The name Volunteer Youth Alliance has a double meaning. Not only does it represent the young people of the City of Alliance and the entirety of Box Butte County, but it is an alliance (defined as a union or association formed for mutual benefit) of youth working alongside seniors toward a better community.

Contact and Role Information

VYA volunteers will report to the designated individual for your assignment. That person may be a representative at your place of work or a RSVP senior volunteer. If you are involved on multiple dates or assignments, you may have more than one contact. Watch your communications closely to ensure that you connect with the right team member at the correct location.

For general concerns or if you can't contact your assigned supervisor, the overall program coordinator for Volunteer Youth Alliance is the RSVP Director whose contact information follows:

RSVP Director: Angela Flesner
Phone number: (308) 762-1293
E-mail: aflesner@cityofalliance.net

Programs and Roles

Volunteer Youth Alliance's work is split into two main areas of community service and organization service and is developed and coordinated through approved station partners. A variety of individuals unite to ensure that the volunteer opportunities are available and rewarding for all participants.

Station Coordinators – An organization representative who solicits and oversees approved volunteer activities.

Youth Coordinators – RSVP volunteers who work with the RSVP to plan volunteer opportunities and communicate with and schedule volunteers.

Youth Volunteer Ambassadors - RSVP and youth volunteers who encourage youth volunteers through school and community efforts.

Referral Counselors – RSVP or school representatives who help youth find volunteer assignments through interest surveys, online listings and via in-person and phone appointments.

Youth Advisory Board - The diversified nine-member board of RSVP volunteers that develops policy and procedures, reviews volunteer activities and otherwise supports Volunteer Youth Alliance.

Youth Junior Advisors – Two youth board members (grades 9 to 12) who are selected each year to work with the Youth Advisory Board.

Volunteer Expectations

Here is what you can expect from Volunteer Youth Alliance:

- Respect of your commitment, time and confidentiality
- Inclusion as a valued player on the volunteer team
- Ongoing support from the entire Volunteer Youth Alliance team
- Recognition and appreciation for your service
- The right to decline assignments with which you have no interest

Here is what Volunteer Youth Alliance expects from you:

- Honor your commitment to the Volunteer Youth Alliance partners
- Communicate timely any changes to your volunteer commitments
- Be prompt arriving at assignments and reliable in completion of tasks
- Cooperate with the senior and fellow student volunteers
- Maintain a respectful relationship with clients
- Ensure confidentiality of information regarding clients and other youth in Volunteer Youth Alliance

The expectations are more clearly outlined in the Volunteer Policies and Procedures section of this guide on the following pages.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

It will take time to adjust to your new surroundings and the expectations of Volunteer Youth Alliance. This handbook is designed to help you be successful in your assignments and to answer questions about policies, procedures and expectations.

ABSENCES AND LATENESS

Volunteers are critical to Volunteer Youth Alliance's mission. If you cannot make your volunteer shift for whatever reason, please notify your supervisor or the RSVP Director as soon as possible so that other volunteers may be contacted.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURY

Volunteers must immediately report any accidents or injuries while on assignments with Volunteer Youth Alliance to the RSVP Director. VYA carries supplemental insurance coverage for volunteers.

ATTENDANCE

Be certain to sign in when you begin your volunteer service and sign out when you are finished to ensure that you obtain credit for your service. Time will be digital. Volunteer Youth Alliance uses Duplie to track time. Training on the software will be provided and the system can be accessed at home, the senior center or during volunteer shifts.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

We have an obligation to our clients to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every client served by Volunteer Youth Alliance has the right to confidentiality. That being said, every volunteer must use his or her best judgment. If you are aware of a client issue that requires immediate help, please inform the RSVP Director.

As you work with the staff, information on a confidential matter may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know it. This applies to making copies of any Volunteer Youth Alliance records, reports, or documents without prior approval. Release of any confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service.

DONATIONS

VYA volunteers will not be required to solicit donations; however, some assignments may result in donations toward the funding of the program. Volunteers should not accept any payments directly but rather refer donors to the RSVP Director.

DRESS CODE

Volunteer Youth Alliance has a casual dress code, but we ask that your attire be neat, clean and conservative. Generally youth volunteers should wear the VYA t-shirt that is provided for each volunteer.

It may be necessary for Volunteer Youth Alliance to amend the dress code to accommodate the needs of certain events. Any modifications will be made clear to the volunteer in advance of the assigned shift and volunteers may decline that shift with no negative impact on their volunteer record.

Unless considered a safety hazard, choices about the following are left to individual volunteers' judgment:

- Haircut, style and color
- Tattoos, piercings and other body art
- Religious and culture-specific attire and jewelry

While Volunteer Youth Alliance implements a casual dress code; clothing, footwear and grooming should be appropriate for the type of service and reflect favorably on the youth of Box Butte County.

EQUAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY

Volunteer Youth Alliance provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit the performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon the ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

In instances where a youth voluntarily leaves or graduates, Volunteer Youth Alliance representatives would like to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions the volunteer may have about VYA. If you decide to leave, you will be asked to grant us the privilege of an exit interview. We hope that the interview will help us part as friends, as well as provide insight into possible improvements. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that Volunteer Youth Alliance will provide to another agency.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Youth volunteers are not reimbursed for any expenses incurred while serving on behalf of Volunteer Youth Alliance. VYA has a very limited budget, so expenses must generally be preplanned and covered by other agencies within the community.

FEEDBACK

An efficient, successful operation and satisfied volunteers go hand in hand. Volunteer grievances are of concern to Volunteer Youth Alliance, regardless of whether the problems are large or small.

In order to provide for prompt and efficient evaluation of, and response to, grievances, Volunteer Youth Alliance has established a Feedback Procedure for all volunteers. It will always be Volunteer Youth Alliance's priority to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting grievances.

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement, or an opinion held by a manager or volunteer.

GIFTS AND TIPS

Occasionally, volunteers will receive gifts from clients. In general, it is okay to accept cards and other gifts that are under \$10. Be sure to use your best judgment when determining whether or not it is appropriate to accept any gift. Any questions regarding gifts should be directed to the RSVP Director.

IDENTIFICATION

While volunteering with Volunteer Youth Alliance, we ask that you wear a name badge and/or team t-shirt to identify yourself as a volunteer.

RESIGNATION

While we hope both you and Volunteer Youth Alliance will mutually benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize that it may become necessary for you to leave your assignments with VYA. If you anticipate having to resign your position, you are expected to notify the station contact or RSVP Director in writing as far in advance as possible and make arrangements for an exit interview.

PRIVACY POLICY

For the safety of minor students, exchange of contact information is discouraged between adult participants and any minor which includes cell or land line phone numbers, social media information, email addresses, mailing addresses, etc.

SECURITY

Maintaining the security of Volunteer Youth Alliance and the clients is every volunteer's responsibility. Develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course. For example:

- Always keep cash properly stored. If you are aware that cash is insecurely stored, immediately inform the person responsible.
- Know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers and familiarize yourself with the proper procedure for using them.
- Be cautious and aware of who is in the vicinity of your assignment. Notify a staff member if you have concerns regarding suspicious individuals.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER MEDIA

No volunteer may act as an official spokesperson for Volunteer Youth Alliance without designation by the RSVP Director or the Youth Advisory Board. However, volunteers are encouraged to share their experiences with friends, family and networks. Volunteer Youth Alliance can be found on various social media sites and that's a great place to share experiences. Follow, like and tag Volunteer Youth Alliance and share photos and status updates to show what it's like to volunteer.

SOLICITING

When volunteering your time with Volunteer Youth Alliance, we ask that you refrain from soliciting any political and religious beliefs. While some of our clients are very religious, we ask that you maintain a personal yet professional relationship with them throughout your time as a volunteer. We ask that you do not solicit your own business enterprise or any other private charities.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

By agreeing to volunteer with Volunteer Youth Alliance, you have a responsibility to VYA and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain guidelines for conduct. Volunteer Youth Alliance tries to keep rules to a minimum. The purpose of the rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow volunteers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to volunteer for everyone for years to come.

TERMINATION POLICY

Volunteer Youth Alliance is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. In general, failure to adhere to policies of Volunteer Youth Alliance is cause for immediate release. Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Theft of property or misuse of agency funds, equipment, or materials
- Falsifying statements on the volunteer application or during the interview process
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts
- Abuse, mistreatment or lack of respect for clients, volunteers or staff
- Releasing confidential information
- Unwillingness to support and further the mission of the organization

Volunteer Youth Alliance generally encourages second chances for its youth; however, the Youth Advisory Board decides if terminated youth will be given another chance to serve.

UNACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are listed on the following page. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of Volunteer Youth Alliance. If you have questions concerning any volunteer or safety rule or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see your volunteer coordinator or the RSVP Director for an explanation.

If a volunteer violates any rules established by Volunteer Youth Alliance, including the following rules, that person may be subject to discipline up to, and including immediate discharge.

Unacceptable activities include, but are not limited to:

- Willful violation of any agency rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to Volunteer Youth Alliance.
- Willful violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety rules or Volunteer Youth Alliance safety practices; failure to wear required safety equipment; tampering with Volunteer Youth Alliance safety equipment.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person.

- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at any Volunteer Youth Alliance event or job assignment.
- Possession or use of all illegal drugs or other illegal substances is prohibited.
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism.
- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons, or explosives on agency property or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence towards anyone on agency premises or when representing Volunteer Youth Alliance; fighting or horseplay or provoking a fight on agency property or negligent damage of property.
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your volunteer coordinator.
- Threatening, intimidating or coercing fellow volunteers or volunteer coordinators on or off the premises – at any time, for any purpose.
- Theft of agency property or the property of fellow volunteers or clients; unauthorized possession or removal of any agency property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of agency equipment or property for personal reasons; using agency equipment for profit.
- Any other illegal acts as defined by Federal or state laws
- Dishonest, willful falsification or misrepresentation of your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of agency records or other agency documents.
- Breach of confidentiality of personnel information.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another volunteer on the job; willfully restricting volunteer output or engaging others to do the same.
- Immoral conduct or indecency on agency or client property.

VEHICLE USAGE

It is the responsibility of youth volunteers to have a valid driver's license or permit and the legal insurance coverage and licenses on vehicles (as required by the State of Nebraska) used while volunteering with Volunteer Youth Alliance. It is required that volunteers comply with State statutes while operating a motor vehicle.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Event ticket booths
- Concession stands
- Hospital gift shop assistance
- Companion and care center services (music, reading, etc)
- Hospital and nursing home compassion services
- Food pantry, commodities and mobile food truck assistance
- Meal preparation and delivery
- Senior services (lawn care and snow removal)
- Community meals (Community Table, Thanksgiving meal)
- Baking assistance (reception cookies)
- Assistant coaches
- Equipment managers
- Sports records (score keepers, statisticians)
- Officiating (umpires, line judges, etc.)
- Event assistance (5K runs, face painting, etc)
- Sidewalk crossing art
- Window decorations
- VIPS assistance (bike rodeo, parade assistance, info booth)
- Library program assistance
- Book sale support
- ARC program assistance (leagues, after-school, etc.)
- School support (reading, tutoring, teacher assistance)
- After-school programs
- School crossing guards
- Community beautification (clean ups)
- Recycling assistance
- Planned community improvement projects
- Webpage design and upkeep

Station Partners

- Alliance Public Schools
- Box Butte General Hospital
- Alliance Recreation Center
- City of Alliance (Police, Animal Shelter, Library, Museum, Senior Center)
- Keep Alliance Beautiful
- Community Table
- Aging Office of Western Nebraska
- Northwest Community Action
- Western Health and Community Resources
- Alliance Ministerial Association and the various churches

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteer Youth Alliance believes in the inherent ability of every young person to make a difference in the lives of themselves, others and their communities. Volunteer Youth Alliance strives to create a nurturing space where youth can share, grow, and be supported.

In pursuit of this goal, volunteers are expected to keep all information regarding the organization, other youth and families in our program confidential and to treat everyone with respect. If there is a situation in which you feel a staff member should be aware of a problem regarding one of the youth in our program, contact the RSVP Director to determine the best possible solution. Failure to comply with these policies may result in dismissal from volunteer staff and/or civil or criminal prosecution in accordance with applicable statutes.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have been given a copy of the Volunteer Youth Alliance "Volunteer Handbook". I understand that it summarizes Volunteer Youth Alliance's guidelines and expectations of me as a volunteer. I understand that volunteering with Volunteer Youth Alliance is not for a specified term and is at the mutual consent of Volunteer Youth Alliance and myself. I agree to abide by the Policies and Procedures laid out in the Volunteer Handbook.

By signing this form, I hereby authorize that:

- I understand that for the safety of students and volunteers and in adherence to our privacy policy, there will be no exchange of contact information between myself and any other person that includes any phone numbers, social media information, email or mailing addresses, etc.
- I understand that I may be required to undergo a background check if I request to work with minors and that I will comply with such request prior to beginning my volunteer work with Volunteer Youth Alliance.
- I authorize Volunteer Youth Alliance to use video, photographs, electronic images, and/or audio recordings in which I appear for public relations purposes.
- I understand that falsification or significant omissions of any information may be considered justifications for dismissal if discovered at a later date.
- I will honor my commitment to the program, cooperate with the Volunteer Youth Alliance staff and fellow volunteers, be prompt and reliable, notify the volunteer coordinator of any changes to your commitment as a volunteer
- I will keep all communications with or concerning the youth and families in our program confidential, maintain a respectful relationship with clients, and discuss any and all issues with Volunteer Youth Alliance staff.
- I will promote the safety of the youth, staff, and volunteers by adhering to all Volunteer Youth Alliance rules and guidelines.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Confidentiality Agreement

Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, members, staff, volunteers and of Volunteer Youth Alliance itself is a basic value of VYA volunteers. Personal and financial information is confidential and should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without permission or authorization from the RSVP Director.

Care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared.

Employees, volunteers and board members of Volunteer Youth Alliance may be exposed to information that is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of Volunteer Youth Alliance that such information must be kept confidential both during and after employment or volunteer service. Staff and volunteers, including board members, are expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the time of separation from employment or expiration of service.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this policy and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including removal/dismissal.

Certification

I have read Volunteer Youth Alliance's policy on confidentiality and the Statement of Confidentiality presented above. I agree to abide by the requirements of the policy and inform my supervisor immediately if I believe any violation (unintentional or otherwise) of the policy has occurred. I understand that violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my service with Volunteer Youth Alliance.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form

Volunteers under 18 are required to bring a signed waiver form prior to the first volunteer assignment. Without it, the minor will not be allowed to volunteer. A parent or legal guardian of each minor must read and agree to the following:

By signing this form, I the parent or legal guardian of the youth named below, consent to the child's participation in the volunteer activities organized by Volunteer Youth Alliance. I **understand** that the child will be provided with orientation and training necessary for the safe and responsible performance of the volunteer duties and will be expected to meet all requirements of the position, including compliance with Volunteer Youth Alliance policies and procedures. I understand that my child will receive no monetary compensation for this work. I also understand that inherent risks may be associated with volunteer activities, including but not limited to, broken bones, concussions, sprains, paralysis and death, and will not hold Volunteer Youth Alliance accountable or liable for any injuries that unintentionally result from the child's participation or that arise during the time spent volunteering due to any underlying physical condition.

I _____ give permission for my son/daughter, _____, who is _____ years old to volunteer for Volunteer Youth Alliance.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date: _____

Phone and Email _____

In the event of an emergency please contact the following person(s):

Contact and Relationship _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Photo/Media Release

To recognize the great work of our volunteers, we occasionally post photographs on our social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter), on our website or in print materials. Please let us know your preference by checking the appropriate line on the options below.

_____ I give permission for my child's name, photo, video image, and/or achievement(s) to be disclosed on social media, on the website, in print materials or released to the media.

_____ I do not want my child's name, photo, video image, and/or achievement(s) disclosed on social media, on the website, in print materials or released to the media.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Printed _____ Date _____

