



The Amherst Survival Center Volunteer Handbook 2019-2020

Amherst Survival Center

138 Sunderland Road, PO Box 9629
North Amherst, MA 01059
413-549-3968
info@amherstsurvival.org
www.amherstsurvival.org

Contact: Lisa Solowiej, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

volunteer@amherstsurvival.org
(413) 549-3968 ext. 111

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Welcome to the Amherst Survival Center!

When you arrive at the Amherst Survival Center, you realize it's a special place.... Clearly people need the services that we offer because there are dozens of people here at any given time. Many of them appear to be working. It may not be obvious who's a volunteer, who's staff or who's using our services (participants), but among the shoppers, eaters, talkers and workers, there is a commitment to keeping this place running and running well.

The Amherst Survival Center is many things to many people: It is a Food Pantry that distributes a large box of non-perishables to hundreds of families monthly. It's a Kitchen where you can enjoy a nutritious hot lunch. It's a place to access fresh produce and bread daily. It's a Community Store where people can find necessary clothing, household items, books and children's toys, at no cost. It's a Health Clinic where people get treatment and answers to their medical questions. And it's a community center where dozens of people spend time, share ideas and help each other. For so many people, this is their home, a place to come and be welcomed by name and with a smile, where they can be with others and alleviate isolation by being part of a community.

Almost everything that happens here is done with volunteer help! Our small staff of 11 people relies on over 250 volunteers a week to:

- Pick up fresh bread and produce at area markets and local farms
- Pick up food at the Food Bank
- Stock and distribute food in the pantry
- Sort, package and distribute fresh produce and bread
- Accept and sort donated clothing and household items
- Cook, serve lunch and wash the dishes
- Organize and clean our space
- Answer phones and greet participants
- Work on special projects and special events
- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Help with fundraising
- Organize food drives
- Staff and support the Health Clinic

In addition to ASC services, we host a variety of community partners in our "Consult" room (off of the community dining room). These partners offer additional services that support our mission. They include: Food Bank of Western Mass (Tuesdays: helping with SNAP applications); Salvation Army (Tuesdays: emergency vouchers); Health insurance (Thursdays: helping with health insurance enrollment); case management (Thursdays: Elliott Homeless Services). In addition, the Center has volunteers that offer two additional services: Information & Referral (Mondays) and Job Search Support (Thursdays). See the ASC monthly calendar for a current schedule.

About The Handbook

This Handbook is designed to introduce volunteers to the Amherst Survival Center (ASC) and to provide a basic overview of our services, our mission, the important work of our volunteers, information about volunteering at the ASC, and policies and procedures that should guide your volunteering experience. This Handbook will be reviewed annually. Policy changes will be noted and volunteers will be informed as needed.

The ASC is committed to excellence and improvement, and improvement means change. We hope we can support one another as we strive to help our neighbors in need. Current volunteers suggested many of the sections in this Handbook as a way to help future volunteers. Please feel free to submit comments on how we can continue to improve our services and this Handbook.

If you have any questions or need any clarification of this Handbook, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director.

Thank you for joining us and donating your time and your skills.

Introduction to the Amherst Survival Center

HISTORY OF THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER

The ASC was started in response to a growing phenomenon of poverty in western Massachusetts in the early 1970s. Rising unemployment, cuts in welfare funding, and the closure of institutional state facilities all contributed to the growing need for assistance. And for many, asking for help was a humiliating experience.

In 1977, Amherst resident Jane Holappa brought the need for a community resource center to the attention of the town. As a single mother who had recently had her electricity cut and was struggling with decreased welfare, Holappa reached out to friends and neighbors for assistance. Seeking to provide a place of community support for people confronting similar challenges, the ASC began as a telephone and storage area in Holappa's basement. In 1980 the ASC was granted space at the Jones Library. Five months later the Town of Amherst provided space in the basement of a school in North Amherst Center.

In December of 2012, after decades of dreaming and years of planning, designing and fundraising, the ASC moved to its new home at 138 Sunderland Road. In 2013, its first year in the new building, the ASC welcomed over 5,100 people.

MISSION

Our mission is to connect residents of Hampshire and Franklin Counties with food, clothing, health care, wellness and community primarily through volunteers.

As a volunteer, you are a key part of the way we deliver services to our neighbors.

CORE VALUES

The ASC is committed to the following core values. These values apply on both the individual and the organizational level and inform and guide all practices.

Inclusive Community: We are committed to fostering a strong, cooperative and diverse community. We provide a respectful, fair community with the opportunity for friendship, security, and change.

Compassion: We are committed to the values of compassion, dignity, humor, respect, and patience. We nurture acceptance and caring within the community.

Integrity: We seek to maintain an environment that embraces the values of accountability, openness, transparency, and authenticity.

Continual Improvement: We are committed to continually reflecting on, consistently evaluating what we do, identifying research to improve our work, and using best practices in all that we do.

Stewardship: We are dedicated to carefully managing the Center's human resources, ensuring sound fiscal management and development, and consistently examining and conserving our use of energy and materials.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Amherst Survival Center is a welcoming community. Families and individuals can come for food, clothing, health care, and companionship, and to share their resources, information, concerns, experiences, and expertise. We create an environment where people move beyond a condition of need and where everyone can rely on, support, and accept each other.

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct refers to all members of our community: participants, volunteers and staff.

The Amherst Survival Center (ASC) is committed to providing a safe, positive environment for all participants.

Verbal or physical aggression or bullying are not permitted at the ASC or its events.

All firearms, unlawful weapons or other dangerous weapons are strictly prohibited at the ASC or its events.

Behaviors that compromise this environment will lead to immediate disciplinary action, the nature of which will depend on the severity of the infraction and disciplinary history.

Some examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Disrespectful treatment of others, including that which is based on race, color, religion, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, class, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, or any other personal characteristics
- Possession or distribution of alcohol or drugs at the ASC or its events. Disruptive or otherwise unacceptable behavior resulting from consumption of drugs or alcohol at the ASC or its events
- Disrespect for others' belongings and bodies
- Abuse of ASC privileges by taking more than one's share
- Sale of goods or services obtained at the ASC
- Threatening gestures or comments
- Physical assault

If an individual feels that our safe and positive environment is being jeopardized, they should bring their concerns to a staff person, the Program Director, or the Executive Director for appropriate action.

The ASC Board supports a climate of open discussion of problems. There will be no reprisals of any kind for bringing complaints to the attention of the staff.

OUR PROGRAMS, VOLUNTEER ROLES & VOLUNTEER ACCESS TO SERVICES

Program Description	How to Access
<p>Fresh Food Rescue Before we open to the public, volunteers drive to our partners (local farms, businesses, supermarkets) and pick up donated produce, prepared foods, and baked goods. They deliver these donations to the ASC.</p> <p>Between 9:30am-11:00am, volunteers at the ASC help to prepare fresh food distribution by bagging donated produce and baked goods, and sorting the donations.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on the implementation of fresh food rescue efforts and what can be donated to this service, ask the Program Director.</i></p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Daily Food Distribution From 11:00am-12:00pm and then again at 12:30pm each day, we distribute bread, produce and sweets donated from local stores and farms. Participants get a ticket at the front desk that they provide to the volunteers in the fresh food distribution area. Food is provided within set limits which can vary during the day and which are based on the amount received in the morning. People can get fresh food distribution only once a day.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on the implementation of fresh food distribution and what can be donated to this service, ask the Program Director.</i></p>	<p>Get a ticket at the Reception Desk. If you're volunteering at 11am, you can go to fresh food before it opens between 10:45am-10:55am (if FFD is ready). Otherwise follow the rules on the signage at the fresh food area.</p>
<p>Reception Desk & Welcome Volunteers staff our front desk as a reception area to welcome visitors to the ASC and answer the telephone. We welcome each person who comes in; ask her or him what town they're from, and offer them a ticket to use in the fresh food area. We may also provide a brief tour and written information if it's the participant's first time at the ASC, in the event they need an introduction to our services.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on the reception desk, ask the Program Director.</i></p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

Program Description	How to Access
<p>Hot Lunch</p> <p>From 12:00pm-1:00pm, a nutritious protein and produce filled meal (complete with vegan and vegetarian options) are served. Signage is provided to indicate common allergens that may be included in the food preparation. We cannot vouch for the ingredients in donated prepared foods. Volunteers come to the Center from 9:00am-12:00pm to cook the hot lunch and prepare salads. Another shift of volunteers comes to the Center from 11:30am to 2:00pm to serve lunch and clean up afterwards. Participants who cannot join us to sit down for lunch are invited to take lunch in a “to-go” container.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on lunch and what can be donated to the kitchen, ask the Kitchen Coordinator.</i></p>	<p>Get in line between 11:45am and 1:00pm and enjoy lunch. (There is no special seating for volunteers.)</p> <p><i>If volunteers in Fresh Food Distribution and the Food Pantry need to get lunch quickly in order to return to their volunteer assignment, they (or their service coordinator) may ask the Kitchen Coordinator and arrange for an early lunch.</i></p>
<p>Hot Lunch “To-Go”</p> <p>From 12:00pm-1:00pm, a limited number of pre-assembled lunches to go will be available upon request, in the Program Director’s office (located behind the reception desk).</p>	<p>12:00pm-1:00pm. Go to the Program Director’s office (behind the reception desk) and there is a cart with prepackaged to go lunches. Request one, and go!</p>
<p>Food Pantry</p> <p>Each month, families and individuals from Amherst, Belchertown, Deerfield, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield, Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, South Deerfield, South Hadley, Sunderland, Whately, and Ware can get 50-100lbs of dry and canned goods, dairy and protein from our Food Pantry. Food Pantry hours are from 11:00am to 15 minutes before our closing. During months that have scheduled school vacations (February, April, June, July, August, and December), the Pantry offers a ‘Kids Boost’ program where families from these towns with school-age kids get extra food with their monthly distribution. The Pantry also includes personal care items such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, toilet paper, diapers, etc. Volunteers stack shelves with food, assist shoppers, and sort donations from food drives. The Food Pantry assists, receives, and sorts food drive collections and oversees our distribution of Thanksgiving boxes.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on delivering pantry services, community food drives, and what can be donated to this service, ask the Pantry Coordinator.</i></p>	<p>Go into the Pantry during its open hours, bring documentation of your residence, sign up for the service, and shop during its open hours.</p> <p><u>Taking food from the pantry, separate from your distribution, is not allowed.</u></p>

Program Description	How to Access
<p>Community Store Volunteers sort and display donated clothing, household items, books and children's toys. Participants are invited to take up to one bag from the Community Store a day. The Community Store oversees special collection initiatives.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on using the Community Store, and what can be donated to this service, ask the Store Coordinator.</i></p>	<p>Bring your own bag to the Community Store and fill it up with 15 items. You can fill one bag per day. Shopping from the sorting room is not allowed.</p> <p>Store volunteers may shop at specific times as set by the Store Coordinator. Check in with the Store Coordinator regarding the scheduled time during your shift to shop.</p>
<p>Movie Nights, Cooking Class, Yoga, Music, And Other Recreational Events Thursday afternoons and early evenings we often show movies, or host a healthy cooking class. We sometimes have music concerts. If you have any ideas, please bring them to the Program Director.</p>	<p>Feel free to attend.</p>
<p>Thursday Evening Meal We serve a simple meal on Thursday evenings. It usually consists of sandwiches, pizza, and leftovers from our delicious lunch. Sometimes, a volunteer group provides a special meal. Volunteers serve the meal.</p> <p><i>For specific rules on serving dinner, and what can be donated to this service, ask the Kitchen Coordinator.</i></p>	<p>Get in line before or after 5:00pm on Thursdays and enjoy dinner.</p>
<p>Social Services Local social service agencies come to the ASC regularly to offer needed access to healthcare, food stamps, fuel assistance, information about housing, case management, vouchers, etc.</p> <p>For more information on our community partners, see our website at www.amherstsurvival.org.</p>	<p>Sign up for the service you want and go at the scheduled time to meet with our community partner.</p>
<p>Health Clinic Volunteer doctors provide check-ups, examinations, diagnoses, prescriptions and referrals to patients on Mondays from 12:30pm to 1:30pm and Thursdays from 4:30pm to 5:30 pm.</p> <p><i>For specific policies on the Health Clinic and what can be donated to this service, ask the Clinic Coordinator.</i></p>	<p>Sign up for a medical appointment by 1:00pm on Mondays and 5:00pm on Thursdays.</p>

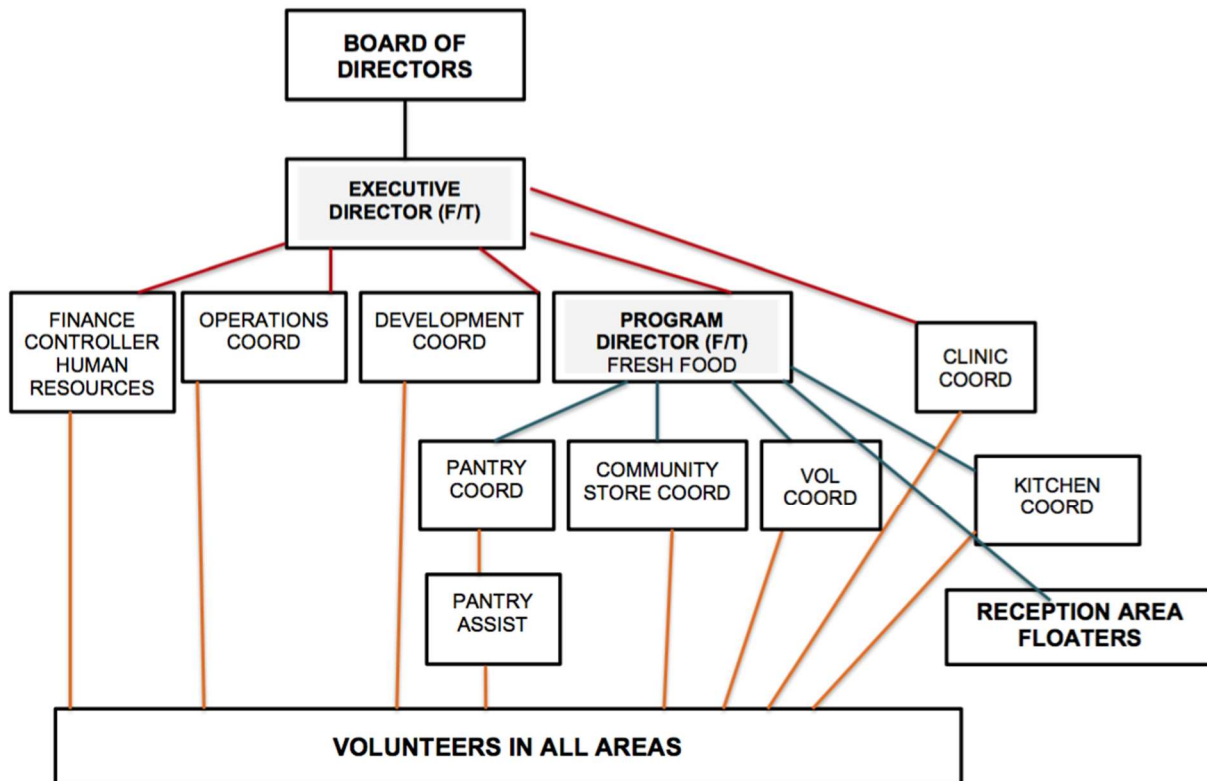
Program Description	How to Access
Shower, Laundry Facilities and Private Lockers Reserved for people experiencing homelessness. Staff has a key to the shower. There is a sign-up sheet for the laundry facilities on the cabinet next to the washer. <i>For information on using this service, ask the Program Director.</i>	<u>Available to people experiencing homelessness.</u> Laundry sign-up on the list next to the washing machine. For a locker, see the Program Director.

Please note that some exceptions regarding how to access services may be made at the discretion of the Area Coordinator and/or the Program Director, and/or the Executive Director.

HOW WE ARE FUNDED

The ASC is funded primarily through donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations. We also seek and receive private and public grants to support our programs. We receive significant in-kind contributions of goods that support our services.

AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

You can see a listing of our current Board of Directors on our website at www.amherstsurvival.org.

STAFF

We have a small staff, 3 full-time (Executive Director, Program Director, and Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator) and 8 part-time staff.

- **Food Pantry Coordinator**, is responsible for ensuring the Pantry shelves are stocked, distributing food to participants, organizing and maintaining the Pantry, keeping accurate records and statistics for the Pantry and food drives. Contact: pantry@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X104
- **Carleen Basler - Program Director** oversees daily operations, the reception area, and the fresh food distribution program, and works directly with the ASC's participants. Contact: programdirector@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X102
- **Lev Ben-Ezra - Executive Director** is responsible for overall management of the operations of the ASC, fundraising, fiscal management, and community relations. Contact: ED@amherstsurvival.org, 548-3968 X107
- **Susan Cox - Community Store Coordinator**, is responsible for the Community Store, its donations and special clothing and material drives. Contact: store@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X101
- **Penny Coy - Pantry Assistant**, organizes the Food Pantry inventory and helps to generate it through community food drives. Contact: penny@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X104
- **Becky Lockwood - Kitchen Coordinator**, is responsible for the planning, cooking, and supervision of the ASC's daily lunches and weekly dinner. Contact: kitchen@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X102
- **Richard Nadolski - Clinic Coordinator**, is responsible for supporting the operations of our Free Clinic and for supporting patients to access nonmedical health services. Contact: clinic@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X109
- **Lisa Queenin - Development Coordinator**, is responsible for fundraising and donor relations. Contact: development@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 x108
- **Blaire Robey - Maintenance Coordinator**, is responsible for the maintenance of the ASC's vehicles, the physical space of the ASC, recycling efforts, and collecting furniture for our Trash to Treasures used furniture sale. Contact: brobey@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X106
- **Kara Schnell –Finance & Human Resource Manager**, is responsible for handling all the ASC's financial operations and overseeing human resources policies. Contact: kara@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X105
- **Lisa Solowiej - Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator**, is responsible for supervising, supporting, recruiting, training volunteers and overseeing the volunteer program. Contact: volunteer@amherstsurvival.org, 549-3968 X111

Our Volunteer Program

PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

We are a welcoming community where families and individuals can come for meals and groceries, medical services, clothing and companionship, to share material resources, information, concerns and frustrations. No one is turned away from goods or services.

The ASC succeeds because of the generous donations of time (volunteers), funds (donors), and resources (donors and community partners).

Here are comments from individuals about volunteering at the ASC:

- *"I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to volunteer right here. It is a very complete and extraordinary experience for me and the supervisors are wonderful."*
- *"It means a lot to me that I'm able to "take time off" when I need it. Flexibility is important to me."*
- *"It should be considered a privilege to be a volunteer."*
- *"You folks are awesome at making me feel appreciated!"*
- *"I like how often I am thanked for what I do."*

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our 250+ weekly volunteers are from everywhere. Some come here for food or clothes and decide to help out. Some find themselves with extra time on their hands and a desire to be part of a unique community. Some are college students who are participating in service or work-related programs. Some are retired, others laid off. Some are required to do community service. Volunteering is an opportunity, and volunteers are welcome, needed and truly appreciated. Please note, volunteers are not employees of the Amherst Survival Center, and serve at the discretion of the organization.

The ASC succeeds because of donations of resources, goods and time, on the part of the many who are committed to supporting our neighbors in need. All service areas rely on volunteers to deliver services. In addition, we have "floaters" - volunteers who assist the Program Director in areas at the Program Director's discretion to ensure the smooth operations of the ASC.

The ASC is committed to improving the ways we provide services. Please communicate with your Service Coordinator/ Supervisor, the Volunteer Coordinator, and/or the Program Director if you have any suggestions for how to make a service run better!

Staff Determinations Regarding “Exceptions”

If a participant has a special need that requires different or additional access to goods or services, volunteers should bring the matter to the attention of a staff person (their Service Coordinator/Supervisor or the Program Director). **Only ASC staff can make this determination.**

WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS DO?

All volunteers at the ASC help participants, other volunteers and staff in implementing the mission of the ASC to provide food, clothing, health care and community by providing much-needed support. Volunteers are integral to our service delivery, and providing volunteer opportunities is a foundation of our community. All volunteers need to comply with volunteer requirements and standards identified in this Handbook.

Individuals volunteer in the Kitchen, daily Fresh Food Recovery, Fresh Food Distribution, in the Community Store, and at the Reception Desk. Help is also needed with operations and maintenance tasks. Other volunteers donate their time to raise funds for the ASC, or organize and assist at our special events. Others organize food drives or help sort the food that is collected. And still others volunteer in groups for special one-time events. For example: fraternities and sports teams volunteer to unload our truck from the Food Bank, while other athletes donate their time to raise funds for our Milk Fund, sort food drive collections, and raise funds for the Center’s diaper drive. Volunteers are asked to assume a range of tasks associated with the smooth operations of specific service areas (i.e., in the Pantry, a volunteer might be asked to help people shop for groceries, bag pet food, sweep the floor, break down cardboard, and stock the shelves in one shift). There are also other group volunteer activities: Build-A-Bag sessions to make reusable bags for the community store and our monthly Mobile Food Program in south Amherst (first Wednesday of the month from 12:30-2:30pm). For more information on these programs, ask the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers are also invited to participate in meetings to improve the delivery of services. These meetings, facilitated by the Volunteer Coordinator, may be all-volunteer meetings or service area-specific “Make it Better” meetings. In these meetings, volunteers in a specific service area generate recommendations to improve the particular service. We encourage volunteers to participate in these meetings. **Volunteers are held to a high standard of conduct as a result of their important role. An ability and interest in following (and supporting) the ASC’s Code of Conduct is a prerequisite for being a volunteer at the ASC. This standard applies to all volunteers when they are in the Center, during their volunteer shift or not.**

Every effort will be made by the Volunteer Coordinator to match an individual’s volunteering preference with the availability of volunteer positions and the individual’s capacity to perform the necessary tasks of the positions. However, we cannot guarantee a volunteer opportunity to each individual who applies in a specific time frame or that the

volunteer will be assigned to her/his preferred position. If a match cannot be found for any reason, the person will be kept on the waiting list until the next orientation date and/or an appropriate shift opens.

Volunteers are supervised and supported by their service area coordinators and the Volunteer Coordinator.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING AT THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER?

Here's what volunteers recently said about their volunteer experience at the ASC:

- *"I enjoy the community! The center is like a second family. As a college student, I am grateful to connect to the people permanently residing in the Pioneer Valley."*
- *"A chance to help others, to come out of "shell" and meet people who may be different from me, to learn to get along with others."*
- *"The opportunity to meet people from all walks of life."*
- *"Helping others and the volunteers."*
- *"It's an opportunity to give in many different ways."*
- *"Helping people."*
- *"Spending some amount of time each week in a purely giving mode..."*
- *"Contributing to something that is bigger than me."*
- *"I enjoy helping other people in need at a place where there is a great sense of community and everyone has equal access to services."*
- *"Providing a service and being part of a community."*
- *"Seeing so many working together."*
- *"Helping others, because we have or could all be in a situation where we need a helping hand."*
- *"I love having the opportunity to help the community I live in."*

There is a real satisfaction in knowing that your commitment of time and energy is needed and important work. Volunteering leads to a greater understanding of issues that affect people in the community, whether it's low income, job loss, medical crisis, a disability or fire. It is an opportunity to learn how local government, the business community, churches and social service agencies interact to seek solutions for community challenges. You will meet many new people while volunteering at the ASC and your community will grow.

If you are over the age of 55, you can join the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and they will reimburse you for up to \$12/month for your travel expenses as well as offer you other benefits. See the Program Director if you are interested in this program.

Volunteers who drive (using their own vehicle) as part of their volunteering (for e.g. Fresh Food Recovery) can track and submit their mileage on their taxes as a contribution. For more information, see IRS publication 526 at www.irs.gov.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS

We dedicate ourselves to being fair and equitable, in practice and in appearance, as we serve more people. For us, this means no one who works here (or their friends and/or family), as a paid staff person or as a volunteer, gets more access or more services than anyone else who comes to the ASC. **However, each of us is ALWAYS welcome to participate in – and use - ASC programs.**



Every person who comes to the Amherst Survival Center should know that they are able to access the same goods and services as anyone else, regardless of who they know, how often or infrequently they come to the ASC, or whether or not they are able to volunteer.

Participants who may need “more” or “different” or “exceptions”

If a participant has a special need that requires different or additional access to goods or services, or a special allocation due to unique circumstances, volunteers should bring the matter to the attention of a staff person (their Service Coordinator/Supervisor or the Program Director). **It is the staff’s responsibility to make a determination on this request.**

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to:

- Follow and support our Code of Conduct. **You must treat everyone with dignity and respect.**
- Help the ASC be a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. Facilitate a climate of trust and mutual support through relationships focused on respect. As a volunteer, you are held to this standard even when you’re in the ASC during a time when you’re not scheduled for a volunteer shift.
- Contact **the Volunteer Coordinator** if you cannot come in for a shift, as soon as you can.
- Use your good judgment in terms of your own physical condition, and do not come to the ASC to volunteer if you are sick, or have any condition that could negatively impact on your ability to deliver quality services. Please stay home and take care of yourself. If you’re in a position where you handle food, please follow the specific

guidelines included in this Handbook. Then, contact **the Volunteer Coordinator** to let them know (see absences).

- Remember that you are not rule enforcers or gatekeepers; you are helpers. At times, you may have to clarify information or a policy, but try and do so with a smile.
NOTE: *If a rule needs to be enforced, get a staff person.*
- Ask a staff person if you have a question or are unsure of an answer.
- Respect our participants' privacy. You will get to know many people who come into the ASC. Some of them may share their stories with you. *It is crucial that you keep their information confidential.*
- Exercise the privilege of using data systems with care and integrity, and actively guard the privacy of individuals.
- Recognize that most people here are doing their best. Say "*thank you.*" If you make a mistake (because we all are human) say "*I'm sorry.*"
- Try to resolve conflicts with direct and respectful conversation. If unsuccessful, please involve a staff person.
- Ensure the fair and equitable distribution of goods and delivery of services.
- Refer participants who need special access to a staff person.
- Avoid arguments or forcing personal values, beliefs, and behaviors on others.
- Follow policies for service areas.
- Refuse gifts or tips for your volunteering.
- Remember, as a volunteer you are a representative of the Amherst Survival Center when you're in the Center, even if it's not during your volunteer shift. Please follow the volunteer guidelines at all times, and remember you're always expected to follow the Code of Conduct.
- Follow all guidelines for volunteers.

If you become aware of any violation of these responsibilities by a volunteer or staff person, we encourage you to bring it to the attention of a staff person you're comfortable with, the Volunteer Coordinator, the Program Director, or the Executive Director.

VOLUNTEERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Everyone, regardless of where they live or the situation where they find themselves is welcome at the ASC. We do not ask people to show us any identification to come here and “shop” at the Community Store, get bread and produce, or eat lunch. All we ask is for them to tell us where they’re from. With the exception of the Food Pantry (see below), we do not ask people about special circumstances, and we create uniform allotments for goods and services.

An equally important function of the ASC is to help people move beyond a condition of need by working with one another. Volunteering is an opportunity, one that is provided for individuals who want to play a bigger part in the cycle of giving and receiving that defines the ASC.

If you know of a participant’s special circumstances, please tell a staff person.

Volunteers should not make decisions that affect a participant’s access to goods or services. This is a staff role.

Over 6,000 people received goods and services from the Center in 2018, in over 46,000 visits. Participants come from many different places and backgrounds. The Food Pantry is the only program that is geographically limited to residents of 13 towns, requires documentation of residence and a conversation about financial need, and is limited to once a month use.

We are committed to the fair and equitable distribution of all donated goods to everyone who walks into the ASC.

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS AT THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER

Volunteering at the Amherst Survival Center (ASC) is an opportunity.

As a volunteer here you will be:

- Treated like valuable members of the ASC team.
- Treated with respect and dignity.
- Encouraged to create a friendly workplace, demonstrating a feeling of community and always demonstrating mutual respect for one another’s skills.
- Given frequent and respectful feedback on your performance so that it can be improved.
- Given complete and clear instructions so that your duties can be performed effectively.
- Given the opportunity to make suggestions.

- Recognized and appreciated spontaneously and at scheduled events.
- Given proper materials to perform tasks.
- Given a safe work place, free of discrimination.
- Kept informed about the ASC and special events through e-mail and volunteer meetings.
- Able to stop volunteering at any time, for any reason.
- Able to participate and use the ASC goods and services, as a volunteer or as a former volunteer.

Guidance for Volunteering: Policies and Procedures

APPLICATION AND ORIENTATION

All volunteers are asked to fill out an application truthfully and completely. Volunteers are required to attend an orientation (usually 45-60 minutes). At the orientation, you will learn a brief history of the ASC, take a tour of the building and learn about what volunteers do in each program area. You will review the Volunteer Handbook, highlighting our Core Values and Code of Conduct, with the expectation you will read it in full before you start volunteering. After the orientation, you will meet with the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss your interests, availability and capacity. The Volunteer Coordinator will identify volunteer opportunities that are available. Based on mutual agreement, you will be placed in a service area and assigned a shift. Shifts are usually 2-3 hours. A 'volunteer commitment' is usually for a minimum of six weeks, although most volunteers are here for at least six months, and many serve for years. Regardless of how long a person volunteers, the ASC require 'reasonable reliability' from our volunteers – we are a service organization that relies primarily on volunteers to deliver service, so your consistent volunteering is paramount to our success.

Individuals who are registered with the Massachusetts Sex Offender Board are not eligible to be volunteers in the ASC.

PARKING

We ask that able-bodied volunteers (especially those here before 1pm) park on Cows Road (facing the black fence after The Harp's parking lot) and walk the 3 minutes to the ASC. Our parking lot, unfortunately, isn't big enough for all the volunteers and our participants. You're also welcome to use the public bus (#33) that comes right to the ASC.

SHOWING UP FOR YOUR FIRST SHIFT

It's possible that the first time you will meet the Service Coordinator for your area is when you show up for your first shift.

- Please introduce yourself to the Coordinator.
- You will be instructed on what to do, either by the Service Coordinator, the Volunteer Coordinator, or a designated volunteer.

Volunteers should expect and will receive support, training related to volunteering at the Center, and appreciation. After the first several hours of volunteering, you may meet with the Volunteer Coordinator to assess how things are going and to ensure you are getting the support you need and that the ASC is benefiting from the work you are doing. ***If volunteers do not follow ASC policies they may be asked to stop volunteering.***

DRESS

Volunteers should dress appropriately for their assigned area and check to see if there are specific guidelines for different areas (e.g. closed-toe shoes and head coverings for the kitchen) and demonstrate good personal hygiene. Full length shirts and shoes are required in all program areas. The ASC is also a family-friendly place, and we ask that clothing respect this. Some guests may have sensitivity around smells and fragrances, so we would ask that you limit your use of perfumes and colognes. Volunteers should not wear clothing or buttons that is partisan/political or that expresses controversial value/opinion statements or images while volunteering. Wearing partisan buttons while volunteering may give the appearance of partisanship (for the organization) and should be avoided.

SMOKING

There is no smoking of any kind allowed in the ASC or in its outside eating area. Smoking is also not allowed in or near the entrances to the building.

PROOF OF HOURS

If you need proof of hours or confirmation of your volunteer hours, you are responsible for letting the Volunteer Coordinator know. You will need to track your hours. The Volunteer Coordinator will write necessary letters or fill out paperwork to certify your volunteer hours, in accordance with your needs.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

Because the delivery of our services relies on volunteers, we ask if for any reason you need to be absent for a shift, or if you need to change your scheduled shift, *please try to give the Center one week's notice for any planned absences.*

When you know you'll be absent, **please call or e-mail the Volunteer Coordinator (549-3968 x111, volunteer@amherstsurvival.org and/or your Area Coordinator):**

- Kitchen x102, kitchen@amherstsurvival.org
- Fresh Food Recovery/Distribution x102, volunteer@amherstsurvival.org
- Pantry x104, pantry@amherstsurvival.org
- Community Store x101, store@amherstsurvival.org
- Reception x102, volunteer@amherstsurvival.org

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you are going to be absent at carleen@amherstsurvival.org or 549-3968 x111.

Frequent absences or tardiness could result in volunteer dismissal.

➤ PLEASE DON'T COME TO THE ASC TO VOLUNTEER IF...

- **If you are sick** (diarrhea, vomiting, fever, jaundice, or diagnosed with a condition caused by any one of the following: norovirus, shigella, salmonella, e-coli, or

hepatitis A). We work with a vulnerable population and diseases spread easily. This is CRUCIAL if you work in any of our food programs.

- **If you are high, drunk or stoned, or otherwise under the influence of alcohol or drugs.** You will be asked to leave.

REPORTS

Volunteers need to report any injury immediately to their Service Coordinator or the Volunteer Coordinator. Coordinators will complete an Incident Report and submit it to the Program Director who will review and submit it to the Finance & Human Resources Manager.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Volunteers need to refrain from engaging in any political discussions, distributing political materials, soliciting signatures and displaying pins, badges or apparel that support any particular initiative, candidate or political group on Amherst Survival Center property.

QUESTIONS?

Please do NOT hesitate to ask for help or for information. There will be times when you may be unsure about a rule, procedure, or you may not know the answer to a community member's question in regards to the ASC and the services that we provide.

If you are unsure about something or need help in any way, **please ask a staff person.** We are here to help you! **ASC staff will also remind volunteers of policies and appropriate practices, when needed.**

ASC HOURS AND HOLIDAYS

Volunteer shifts are usually in 2 to 3 hour increments. Onsite volunteer hours are:

- Monday, Tuesday, and Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm
- Thursdays 9:00am to 7:00pm
- The third Saturday of the month – for Food Pantry and Store only – 9:30am to 11:30am

We are closed on the following legal holidays:

- MLK Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day following Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- New Year's Day

You can find a calendar of our scheduled closings on our website.

WEATHER CLOSING POLICY

In case of inclement weather, the Amherst Survival Center closes on any day that the town of Amherst closes due to inclement weather. The town of Amherst posts its closing information by 6am on its website (<https://www.amherstma.gov>) and records it on their main phone line too (413-259-3333) by 6AM. The Amherst Survival Center will post its closings on its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/amherstsurvival) by 8AM.

There are rare circumstances where we would be open with reduced services (for example: no fresh food distribution or no store). Our Facebook page would have these details (www.facebook.com/amherstsurvival).

Problem-Solving Procedures

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Volunteers and participants are obviously critical to the mission of the Amherst Survival Center. One way that the Amherst Survival Center supports volunteers and participants is through an effective system for collecting, documenting, and responding to their complaints or concerns. Discrimination or retaliation against or toward anyone for their part in presenting a complaint will not be tolerated. The policy of the Amherst Survival Center is to promptly review, respond to, and resolve complaints in accordance with the procedure described below.

The Complaint Process

1. If urgent action is needed, notify the Volunteer Coordinator immediately. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the complaint will be submitted for expedited resolution to an appropriate decision maker, as described below.

2. If not urgent, attempt to discuss the complaint as soon as reasonably possible with the Volunteer Coordinator or area coordinator that oversees the area of complaint to resolve the problem.

3. If you are unsatisfied based on that discussion, submit your formal complaint in writing to the Program Director. If the complaint concerns the Program Director, the written complaint should be sent to the Executive Director. To ensure a quick and fair resolution to the complaint, the written complaint must be submitted as soon as possible, but within 2 weeks of the event, or onset of the condition, rule, or practice giving rise to the complaint. The letter should be addressed to the Amherst Survival Center at 138 Sunderland Road, P. O. Box 9629, N. Amherst, MA 01059.

The written complaint should include:

- a brief explanation of the problem and all relevant facts,
- date and time of occurrence, if applicable,
- names of those thought to be involved or who have relevant information, and
- complainant's name and phone number or contact information.

Please note that the Amherst Survival Center will not respond to anonymous complaints. Complainants may enlist assistance in pursuing complaints, or if they are unable to obtain assistance, they may request the Amherst Survival Center to enlist someone on their behalf.

4. A written response to the complaint shall be made within 14 days of receipt of the written complaint.

5. Within 14 days of receipt of the written response, if you are not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, you may appeal by submitting the reason for your dissatisfaction, in writing, to the Executive Director. If the complaint concerns the Executive Director, the written complaint should be sent to the Resolution Committee of the Board of Directors, care of the President of the Board of Directors.

6. The Executive Director shall respond in writing within 14 days of receiving the written complaint.

7. If you are still unsatisfied, you may request in writing that your complaint be

considered by the Resolution Committee of the Board of Directors. The Resolution Committee consists of the Vice President of the Board of Directors, a representative from the Governance Committee, and one other Board Member to be appointed by the Board President. Within 30 days of your request, the Resolution Committee will consider and act on the complaint. The Resolution Committee may, at its sole discretion, affirm or deny your request, choose to investigate further, or choose to refer the matter to the entire Board of Directors. The decision of the Resolution Committee or the entire Board, as the case may be, is final.

Decision makers (Volunteer Coordinator, Program Director, Executive Director, Resolution Committee of the Board, and the entire Board), as applicable, may, at their discretion, interview the complainant and/or witnesses, review documents, or undertake any other investigation that they deem useful in connection with the complaint process.

Anyone reporting a complaint must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information on which the complaint is based. The act of making deliberate falsehoods in connection with the complaint process will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position.

WHAT POLICIES MUST AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER VOLUNTEERS FOLLOW?

Please carefully review the Code of Conduct (p.7) and Volunteer Agreements and Responsibilities (p.16). We expect all volunteers to comply with both at all times in the Center.

The following infractions may result in a suspension of the opportunity to volunteer:

- Disrespectful treatment of participants and/or other volunteers and/or staff,
- Inability or refusal to be supervised by ASC staff,
- Violation of the Code of Conduct, regardless if it is during the person's volunteer shift,
- Using special access to any ASC service or goods for personal benefit,
- Providing or facilitating special access to other volunteers and/or to participants of ASC services or goods (for e.g. giving a special distribution, allowing a participant to have more goods than others, etc.)
- Taking more than the allowed allocation of any services or goods.



Returning to a volunteer shift will be at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator, Program Director and/or the Executive Director.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR REMEDIAL ACTION?

If, at any time, a volunteer's performance or conduct needs improvement, it may become necessary for him or her to have a conversation with the Volunteer Coordinator, appropriate Service Coordinator/Supervisor, and/or the Program Director, and/or the Executive Director. Depending on the circumstances, ASC staff will make an effort to have this discussion in private.

Depending on the situation, various measures may be taken, including: reminders may be given, specific agreed improvements, additional training, reassignment or time off pending reassignment, or time off from the volunteer opportunity. If the problem cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the volunteer may be dismissed from the position.

The ASC staff will make an effort to have an in-person private conversation about the circumstances surrounding any disciplinary action. The following guidelines may be used at the sole discretion of the ASC when a volunteer is in violation of the Code of Conduct or the Volunteer Agreements and Responsibilities:

1. Oral warning, followed up in writing – *by email (when available) or hard copy*
2. Written warning to individual – *by email (when available) or hard copy*
3. Written warning with terms of suspension of volunteer opportunity – *by email (when available) or hard copy*
4. Suspension or Termination of Volunteer Opportunity (Dismissal) – *followed up in writing by email (when available) and hard copy*

These guidelines can be based on cumulative infractions, regardless of whether the infraction is of the same general nature as a previous warning, or it can be applied to a single infraction.

SUSPENSION OF (OR DISMISSAL FROM) VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

If it is determined that it is in the best interest of the volunteer and the ASC to discontinue service, the volunteer will be informed by the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director.

Dismissal or suspension from a volunteer opportunity is a serious consideration. Any conduct that is deemed as detrimental to the ASC's mission or in conflict with our Core Values may be grounds for dismissal or suspension from a volunteer opportunity.

Reasons for termination or dismissal may include, but not limited to: if a volunteer ...

- is unreliable
- is irresponsible
- is disruptive

- shares confidential information
- demonstrates inappropriate behavior
- demonstrates disregard for, or violates, ASC policies and procedures
- undermines the operations of the ASC
- displays behavior that could jeopardize the health and welfare of another person
- does not possess the necessary capacity to perform assigned duties
- inability or refusal to be supervised by ASC staff

Dismissal may be short-term or permanent depending on circumstances.

The process surrounding dismissal or termination will include:

- An in-person conversation with staff (the Service Coordinator/Supervisor, and/or the Volunteer Coordinator, and/or the Program Director, and/or the Executive Director), about the dismissal, and the circumstances surrounding it,
- Followed with a written letter and/or email confirming the action from the Executive Director and describing the circumstances leading to the action.

Volunteers are welcome to respond to the letter and/or email.



Please note that individuals who are temporarily suspended or dismissed as volunteers are always welcome to return to the Amherst Survival Center and use its services.

PRIVACY

The ASC respects the privacy of our volunteers. If a disciplinary or dismissal action is implemented, the circumstances surrounding that action will be kept private, and staff will not comment on it to other volunteers or participants, other than the affected individual.

However, if a volunteer is dismissed for stealing or facilitating the theft of donated goods from the ASC, or other serious infractions, disclosure of these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Executive Director or Board Chair. Even under these circumstances, unless otherwise noted, individuals are welcome to return to the ASC in order to use its services.

POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT

The ASC is committed to maintaining a work environment free of unlawful harassment. The ASC policy prohibits harassment based on sex (including sexual harassment, gender harassment, and harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions) and harassment based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or expression, or any other status protected by federal or state law or local ordinance or regulation.

DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPECIFIC POSITIONS

All positions may include special projects at the request of service coordinators.

PROGRAM AREA	VOLUNTEER
FRONT DESK/RECEPTION	Volunteers staff our front desk as a reception area to welcome visitors to the ASC, ask her or him what town they're from, and offer them a ticket to use in the fresh food area. We may also ask if it's their first time, in the event they need an introduction to our services. Receptionists also answer the phone and oversee the coffee.
FRESH FOOD RECOVERY - DRIVERS	Before we open to the public, volunteers drive to our partners (local farms, businesses, supermarkets) and pick up donated produce, prepared foods, and baked goods. They deliver these donations to the ASC.
FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION: BAGGERS & SORTERS	Between 9am-11am, volunteers at the ASC help to prepare fresh food distribution by bagging donated produce and baked goods, and sorting the donations for the fresh food distribution program.
FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION: DISTRIBUTION	From 11am-12pm and then again at 12:30pm each day, we distribute bread, produce and desserts donated from local stores and farms. Food is provided within set limits which can vary during the day and which are based on the amount received in the morning. Leftovers are usually set out 30 minutes after a meal ends.
COMMUNITY STORE: SORTING ROOM	Volunteers sort through all donated items, hang items for the Community Store. Volunteers set aside items requested in our Request Log.
COMMUNITY STORE: FLOOR	Volunteers organize and display the merchandise on the floor, oversee shopping and assist shoppers, provide bags to shoppers, accept donations and provide receipts, and monitor the Community Store.
FOOD PANTRY	Volunteers stack shelves with food, assist shoppers, weigh distributions, and sort donations from food drives.
KITCHEN: COOKS	Volunteers come to the ASC from 9:00am-12:00pm to cook our hot lunch and prepare salads.
KITCHEN: SERVERS/CLEANER	Another shift of volunteers comes to the ASC from 11:15am to 2:00pm to serve lunch and clean up. Volunteers also come on Thursday evenings to serve light dinner and clean up.
FREE HEALTH CLINIC	Volunteer physicians and nurses provide medical care to patients during medical clinic hours.
FLOATERS	Knowledgeable in a variety of areas, at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator, floaters can help in a range of positions.

Our heartfelt thanks.

Every day, volunteers create, organize and deliver our services, and provide us with the capacity to support our neighbors in need.

The Amherst Survival Center would not be able to operate without the commitment of our volunteers.

Thank you.

The Amherst Survival Center

138 Sunderland Road

PO Box 9659

N. Amherst, MA 01059

Phone: (413) 549-3968

E-mail: info@amherstsurvival.org

Website:

www.amherstsurvival.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/amherstsurvival

Twitter:

www.twitter.com/amherstsurvival

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/amherstsurvival

Schedule:

Monday, Tuesday, Friday: 11:00am - 3:00pm

(food pantry & store close at 2:45pm)

Thursday: 11:00am – 7:00pm

(food pantry & store close at 6:45pm)

3rd Saturday of the month:

Pantry & Store only: 9:30am – 11:30am

1st Wednesday of the month:

Mobile Food Pantry at Southpoint Apartments 1:00pm-2:00pm

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE AMHERST SURVIVAL CENTER VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

I have received a copy of the Amherst Survival Center's (ASC) Volunteer Handbook and understand it is my responsibility to read and understand its contents. I have also been given an opportunity to review the Code of Conduct and the Volunteer Agreements and Responsibilities, and ask questions that may concern me. I understand that the Volunteer Handbook and ASC's policies may change from time to time, at its discretion and without advance notice. I will observe the policies and rules in this Handbook and those established by the Center. I understand that as a volunteer I will not receive any additional ASC services or goods, or provide others with special access to ASC services and goods. I understand that as a volunteer I must comply with the ASC Code of Conduct at all times while at the ASC.

Please return this Acknowledgement to the Volunteer Coordinator when completed.

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

E-MAIL ADDRESS (please print legibly)