

AIO

AREA INTERFAITH OUTREACH

FOOD ASSISTANCE | ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome

On behalf of the Officers, Board of Directors and the entire AIO team, I am pleased to welcome you to AIO Food & Energy Assistance!

Thank you for serving as a Volunteer and helping us achieve our mission of respectfully and compassionately supporting those in need in Knox County with food and energy assistance through AIO's programs.

As a mostly-volunteer organization, we simply could not provide the services we do without you. You are the backbone of this operation! Whether you help assemble bags for the Weekend Meal Program, work in the Food Pantry Market sorting food and culling through vegetables, or help with our energy assistance — each and every moment you choose to spend with us to serve our community is valued.

Together we will be able to provide More Food. More Energy. Now More Than Ever.

Thank you and welcome!

Joe Ryan,
AIO Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

This Volunteer Handbook will provide Volunteers with an overview of Area Interfaith Outreach Food and Energy Assistance (AIO) as well as policies developed by AIO which all Volunteers are expected to follow. Procedures for specific volunteer jobs can be found in Volunteer Procedures Handbooks. We ask all Volunteers to review these publications prior to their first day volunteering at AIO to become familiar with our mission, policies, procedures and Volunteer

expectations. AIO offers training sessions for all Volunteers that we encourage them to attend prior to their first volunteer shift.

All Volunteers are required to have a signed Volunteer Agreement and Liability Waiver before volunteering and whenever the handbook is updated

A free online food safety training course is available to all Volunteers through Good Shepherd Food Bank to become certified in handling food. Any Volunteer in a supervisory position must take this course.

If at any time you have any questions regarding any policy or procedure, please contact the Program Director or the Executive Director

AIO AT A GLANCE

AIO was organized in 1990 by Rockland area faith communities to provide one convenient place where any resident of Knox County could go for food or energy assistance. Many non-member businesses and civic groups also hold events and send donations to support AIO's services. The Board is composed of representatives of the faith communities as well as community members. We rely on donors, grants, and community support for funding.

AIO is a 501c3 non-profit organization. AIO was 100% volunteer run for 30 years. We now have an Executive Director, a Market Director, and a Program Director. Shift management is provided by the Shift Leadership Team composed of the Shift Leaders and the Market Director.

AIO helps people who need food or energy assistance throughout Knox County. Most of our clients are hard-working families trying to make ends meet. Some of our clients are facing medical issues which have caused a disruption to their lives. Many of our clients are elderly who have worked hard their whole lives but are now struggling on a limited income.

Our numbers increase during the winter months when some of the Midcoast jobs are on hiatus - people can't be out on boats, restaurants or hotels are closed, construction jobs aren't as plentiful - we are here to help.

AIO PROGRAMS

Food Market: The AIO Market is open Monday and Wednesday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and Fridays 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Any Knox County household may come for food when they need to. We use the word "Market" because that is the experience we want our clients to have. We pride ourselves on making their experience as much like a grocery store experience as we can.

Food provided includes frozen meat, fresh produce, baked goods, milk and eggs, canned and boxed staples, as well as snack foods and beverages. AIO offers personal care items.

Volunteers are scheduled ahead for shifts and must let the Shift Leader know if they cannot come on a scheduled day so we can try to find a substitute for your shift. We encourage Volunteers to help in finding other Volunteers to fill their absence.

Energy Assistance: AIO's Energy Assistance Program provides clients with an opportunity to request heating fuel and electricity disconnection assistance. . AIO works directly with utility vendors who accept AIO vouchers for payment assistance for heating oil, kerosene, propane, and electricity. Assistance is typically for up to \$600 per year. Either two \$300 vouchers for fuel assistance or one \$300 fuel assistance voucher and one \$300 electricity voucher. This program typically runs from October through May . Clients must live in Knox County and vendors must have a physical presence in Knox County.

Weekend Meal Program: AIO started the Weekend Meal Program (formally the Backpack Program) in 2015 to address weekend hunger experienced by school children in Knox County. The program has since grown to serve over 300 children at 13 schools. Each Friday, participating children are given a bag of shelf-stable foods to bring home. This meal kit contains enough food to provide one meal and several snacks for the children. The weekly menu is planned by the Market Director using food purchased from Good Shepherd Food bank and other food distributors and retailers. The bags are assembled and delivered to the participating schools by a team of Volunteers. Schools are responsible for distributing the bags to the children.

SAFETY & FIRE EMERGENCY

The safety of all Volunteers is of primary concern to AIO. Call 9-1-1 to report any serious injuries. It is important that you familiarize yourself with the location of fire extinguishers and first aid kits. Emergency exit maps are posted in the facility, and a meeting area is posted. In the event of an accident, an accident report must be completed.

- Any injuries incurred in any AIO program must be reported immediately to the Shift Leader and the Program Director .
- Volunteers working alone at the facility should ensure that all doors are locked. The Volunteer should call 9-1-1 if any suspicious behavior is observed.
- If a client becomes agitated and demonstrates threatening or intimidating behavior, the Volunteer should ask the client to leave the premises immediately and should call 9-1-1.
- In the interest of personal safety, no AIO Volunteer should try to escort the person out of the building. Other clients should be discouraged from interfering.

POLICIES

Animals

The only animals permitted inside AIO are dogs who are “service animals” as defined in 5 Maine Revised Statutes Section 4553(9-E). Service animals are specially trained in assisting persons with disabilities and perform certain statutory tasks. “Service animals” are different from “emotional support animals”/“comfort animals”/“assistance animals.” All other animals are prohibited. AIO Volunteers may not bring their pets to AIO during their shifts.

Confidentiality

All information regarding AIO’s clients is confidential. Confidential information includes but is not limited to clients’ names, addresses, paper or electronic files, income, assets, finances, employment, participation in state and federal public benefit programs, and personal information. Access to confidential client information is restricted to designated Volunteers checking clients in or working in Energy Assistance.

Discipline & Termination

AIO can only fulfill its mission if our Volunteers comply with AIO’s policies and standards as set forth in this handbook. Failure to comply may result in discipline and/or termination from the AIO Volunteer program.

Minor offenses will result in counseling, a warning of the consequences of future non-compliance, and an opportunity for correction. Subsequent offenses may result in termination.

The following offenses will result in IMMEDIATE termination from the AIO Volunteer program:

- assault on another person;
- theft of property belonging to AIO, its volunteers, its clients, or any other person on AIO’s premises;
- being impaired by drugs or alcohol;
- bringing a weapon to AIO premises;
- breaching client confidentiality;
- violating professional boundaries;

Discrimination & Harassment

It is the policy of AIO to have a positive environment free of all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Discrimination based on a person’s age, race, religion, national origin, color, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, gender, or other legally protected characteristic is prohibited.

AIO prohibits all forms of sexual harassment, including: unwelcome sexual advances, a suggestive or lewd remark, unwanted hugs, touches, kisses, requests for sexual favors, and, retaliation for complaining about sexual harassment. Please immediately report any prohibited discrimination and/or harassment to the Shift Leader and the Program Director.

Equal Opportunity

AIO is an equal opportunity Volunteer organization and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, religion, sex, national origin, age, or mental or physical handicap.

Media & Public Relations

The Executive Director is the official spokesperson for AIO and is responsible for presenting the public position of AIO. This policy enables AIO to provide the media and the public with consistent, accurate and current information regarding AIO, its services, and programs. Volunteers are to refrain from speaking to the media, businesses, or other organizations without first obtaining approval from the Executive Director.

Minors

Children must be at least 14 years old in order to volunteer at AIO during open hours. Children age 12 and up may volunteer for specific volunteering events when the Market is not open. All persons under the age of 18 must provide written permission from their parent or legal guardian to be a Volunteer at AIO. Children who are Volunteers will be given age appropriate volunteer assignments and will be under the supervision of an adult Volunteer.

Professional Boundaries

AIO is committed to fulfilling its mission fairly and objectively. To maintain professional boundaries, all Volunteers must comply with the following standards. Do not give or lend money, or other personal possessions to AIO's clients. Do not exchange gifts with AIO's clients. Do not give rides to or receive rides from AIO's clients.

Weapons, Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco

AIO is committed to providing a weapon-free, drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free environment. All weapons (concealed and unconcealed), drugs (except prescription medication), alcohol, and tobacco (smoking, chewing, and electronic cigarettes) are prohibited from AIO's premises including the buildings and parking lots at 70 Thomaston Street and at 1A Gordon Drive, Rockland, Maine.

Political & Religious Activity

AIO is a 501(c)(3) organization. By law, none of its resources can be used for partisan political purposes—that is, to support or oppose any candidate running for public office. This is a strict prohibition and any perceived violation could result in a costly investigation by the public, media and/or IRS, and possibly the loss of our tax-exempt status.

Examples of activities to avoid include:

- Making statements that favor or oppose candidates or political parties at any AIO event or meeting or in any AIO official publication, including the website.
- Posting comments that favor or oppose candidates or political parties on any AIO social media, including our Facebook page.
- Allowing a candidate, political party, PAC or any group working in a partisan political way to use AIO facilities without charge.
- Giving a candidate political party, PAC or any group working in a partisan political way any AIO mailing list.
- Forwarding an email from a candidate, political party, PAC or any partisan political group that came to your AIO email account. Do not use the AIO email address to subscribe to candidate or political material. If you inadvertently get candidate or political emails to an AIO email address, delete them and unsubscribe the AIO email address from the email list.
- Viewing candidate, party or other political events or advertisements online on an AIO computer.
- Making statements or handing out literature supportive or critical of a candidate, political party or PAC at an AIO event.
- Using the copier to make copies of campaign materials
- Making or receiving telephone calls in support or opposition of a candidate using AIO phones.
- Wearing political buttons or t-shirts while representing AIO at any event or meeting or in the facility.
- Putting partisan political signs, bumper stickers or political buttons up in any AIO facility.

Proselytizing

AIO is an interfaith organization, which means we accept clients and volunteers alike from all belief systems. Because of this, it is important to remember that we are here to feed our neighbors and not to proselytize. This can make some uncomfortable, and we want AIO to be comfortable for all.

Volunteer Agreement

The following policies have been developed to ensure clarity and a safe, productive volunteer experience at AIO.

AIO commits to:

- Provide an orientation for volunteers
- Provide feedback and, when appropriate, opportunities for greater responsibility
- Be receptive to comments from volunteers regarding ways in which we can better accomplish our mutual mission to address food and energy insecurity.

Volunteers commit to:

- **Attendance:** The Program Director, working with Shift Leaders and the Market Director, will add shifts to our volunteer shift signup program as appropriate for volunteers to sign up for online. Volunteers are requested to arrive promptly for the volunteer assignment, and stay for their entire shift, or notify the Shift Leader in advance if they are unable to come in at their scheduled time so there is ample time to find a substitute for your shift
- **Use of AIO Property:**
 - *Confidentiality.* All information and data about clients, agencies, volunteers, staff and donors of AIO is strictly confidential and may not be taken or discussed outside AIO or with any unauthorized person.
 - *Personal Use of Items.* All food and non-food items are donated to AIO or purchased by AIO for distribution to clients and cannot be used for any other purpose. Volunteers are not permitted to consume, use or remove any food or non-food. Any unauthorized use/removal of AIO property or information is theft and will result in immediate termination.
 - *AIO Client Volunteers.* AIO Client volunteers are more than welcome to maintain their AIO client status in keeping with Good Shepherd guidelines. To ensure that all clients and all volunteers are treated equally and fairly, client volunteers must shop on days when they are not also volunteering, following all procedures in place for clients of AIO. You may not take more than a non-volunteer client or shop more often.
 - *Illness:* Volunteering at AIO includes handling foods that will be distributed to individuals and families. We ask and expect that all volunteers are in good health. If you are ill or have been ill recently, please reschedule your volunteer service.
- **Safety:**
 - AIO maintains a drug and alcohol-free work environment in all programs. Volunteers who abuse alcohol or drugs are a danger to themselves and others. They will not be permitted to continue as AIO volunteers. If a volunteer reports

for work under the influence they will be sent home and their volunteer services terminated.

- Wear suitable clothing for a warehouse environment. Shoes must be closed toed and jewelry/accessories that hang or dangle must be removed.
- Immediately report any injuries and/or unsafe conditions or practices to the Program Director/Shift Leader.
- Smoking Policy: There is no smoking permitted on premises.

I understand that AIO reserves the right to reassign, reschedule or to discontinue a Volunteer's term of service at any time and for any reason.

I certify that I have read the Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Procedures Handbook appropriate to my Volunteer job. I certify that I have read and understand the guidelines contained in this AIO Volunteer Agreement. I will follow the above guidelines and understand that my continued service will be contingent upon my ability to work productively and safely within these guidelines.

Legal Signature

Date

Printed Name

Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, please contact: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____ Relationship: _____

Volunteer Liability Waiver Agreement

All Volunteers of AIO and its programs, regardless of age, must completely read and sign this Liability Waiver and Emergency Contact information prior to their first volunteer shift. If you are under the age of 18 years, a parent or legal guardian must sign this waiver also.

Description of Risk: It is possible that your involvement could result in personal injury. AIO will provide orientation and training to alert Volunteers to work condition risks. Risks include but are not limited to bending, stooping, reaching, kneeling, lifting and carrying. I certify that I am in good health and physically able to perform such work. I acknowledge that this volunteer work may involve risk of injury from such work and I agree that I am volunteering for AIO at my own risk. _____ (Initials)

Volunteer Agreement: In signing this Liability Waiver, I agree that I am willingly volunteering with AIO and its programs. I agree to work in a safe and responsible manner. I agree to only perform work that I am comfortable doing and that I feel I can accomplish safely. If I am not comfortable with a task, I will immediately notify AIO staff. I agree to wear proper clothes and shoes that I believe will provide protection according to the work conditions. _____ (Initials)

Release: I hereby release AIO, any and all sponsoring organizations or partners, and property owners from any and all claims that may arise from or result in any expenses, personal injury, loss or damage incurred to me or by me during my participation with AIO. _____ (Initials)

Adult/Child Photographic Release: Do you consent to film, photo, or video that may be taken of you while you are volunteering at AIO to be used by AIO or any of its programs for publicity and/or advertising? By agreeing to this you are releasing AIO and its programs from any liability in connection with the use of these materials. ____ Yes ____ No

Information Waiver: I understand that any information I choose to provide AIO will be held in confidence and that AIO and its programs may use and reproduce anonymously compiled survey results, including any information I may have provided, for purposes of program evaluation, communication and publication. _____ (Initials)

Policies: To create a safe environment for everyone, no smoking, Firearms and weapons of any kind, alcohol, drugs, animals, except service animals, are permitted on premises. _____ (Initials)

Participant and Parent Information MUST COMPLETE IN FULL

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature of Agreement: _____ Date _____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Name (please print): _____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature: _____ Date _____