



Young Women's Resource Center Volunteer Handbook

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I. Organizational Overview

Mission, Vision, Core Values

Our Mission: To empower participants to be strong, self-confident, and resilient.

Our Vision: For youth of our community to grow to their full potential and realize the life of possibilities they deserve.

Core Values: Equity, Resiliency, Accessibility, Community, and Advocacy

Who We Serve: The YWRC serves individuals ages 10 – 24 who have been socialized and/or identify as female. This includes cisgender girls, cisgender women, transgender persons and non-binary individuals.

We often refer to participants as “girls and young women*”. We define “girls and young women” as noted in our ‘Who We Serve’ statement above.

We help participants realize their full potential by providing programming to those ages 10-24. Our unique structure features three branches of services – Empowerment, Young Moms, and Counseling – to better serve the members of our community throughout various stages of life. We offer support groups and services for all girls and young women, regardless of what they may be going through in their lives. We open our doors to any girl or young woman who wants to be herself and feel like she belongs.

History

In 1978, a group of visionary women, led by feminist and philanthropist Louise Rosenfield Noun, founded the Young Women’s Resource Center. The 70-year-old Noun had already been the president of the League of Women Voters and the Iowa Civil Liberties Union, had founded the Iowa Women’s Political Caucus and the Des Moines chapter of the National Organization for Women, and had financed the landmark Supreme Court case *Tinker v. Des Moines*, but she looked at the city and saw an inequality that she was determined to combat.

It was with that sentiment in mind that the Young Women’s Resource Center was founded as a place where young girls and women could go to deal with feelings of inadequacy, avoid the juvenile justice system, and be provided with resources that would aid them in finding a positive direction for their lives. More than that, it was founded as a positive place for girls and young women of any background or station, a place where they could go to be safe and happy.

Throughout the last four decades, the Young Women’s Resource Center has grown and



changed to meet the ever-evolving needs of Greater Des Moines' young women. The Young Women's Resource Center is one of few organizations to focus on both prevention and intervention services. We are the only organization to offer doula services and childbirth education specifically for pregnant teens, and we are the only organization working directly with Des Moines Public Schools to educate 6th – 12th grade girls on the topics of body image, self-esteem, healthy relationships, and reproductive health.

For 45 years, the Young Women's Resource Center has been a place for young women to feel free to be themselves. Now, the YWRC serves more than 1,100 girls and young women every year through programs that are always changing to fit the current social climate in which young women live, but it has never wavered in its commitment to the founding vision of Louise Noun which sought to give women a place to be safe, be heard and to live a life of possibilities. Her legacy lives on in every girl who is affected positively by the Young Women's Resource Center.

II. **Volunteer Impact**

Volunteer Value and Impact

Volunteers provide an essential part of our mission - whether through fundraising, in-kind drives and donations, or in-person volunteering with participants - supporting girls and young women to have a life full of possibilities. Every volunteer and volunteer project creates accessibility to our services and resources making a difference in their lives and success in our mission. Volunteers are an integral part of our capacity and expand our ability to provide services.

Volunteer Eligibility Requirements

Volunteers must be over the age of 12 unless volunteering with a guardian. Volunteers will be asked to complete a background check prior to interacting with participants, along with any pertinent training. Due to the size of our facility, we are unable to host community service hours or group activities for more than 10 volunteers and rarely have weekend volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

Listed below are current volunteering positions:

Childcare Volunteer

The Young Moms team hosts a Life Skills and Parenting group on-site on Mondays from 5:30-7:30pm. During this time, participants are able to leave their children with



our Childcare Coordinator so they may fully engage with the group's activities.

Volunteers interested in working in childcare will be asked to interview, complete a background check, and complete a 12-hour training prior to interacting with participants. Once on-boarded, childcare volunteers will work directly with the Childcare Coordinator during groups to host participants and their children.

Y-Dub Club Volunteer

The Y-Dub Club is a casual group of volunteers who are able to help with the YWRC's miscellaneous tasks. This opportunity is great for short term volunteers and/or small groups of volunteers who can help us organize donations, set up for events, and assist with other unique, one-time, or maintenance needs. Y-Dub Club Volunteers will work with the Volunteer Coordinator unless assigned to a task involving a specific staff member or program. Volunteers will be connected to their staff contact when working with programs. Opportunities to volunteer will be shared on our monthly e-newsletter.

Meal Provider Volunteer

Our programs regularly facilitate groups and events at the YWRC to help promote community building and networking among participants. Throughout the year, there are opportunities to provide parts of a meal, group meals, or event style meals. Meal Provider Volunteers will be asked to complete a Civil Rights training and food safety training through the Food Bank of Iowa. Once on-boarded, meal providers will be able to select an available date via a MealTrain link provided for each group and event. Below are examples of meal opportunities:

Lunches - 15 Lunches

Summer Program - Empowerment Team
Art Therapy Groups - Counseling Team

Dinner Meals - 20 Participants

Parenting and Life Skills - Young Mom's Team
Childbirth Education Groups - Young Mom's Team

Events - 40 to 60 Participants

Back to School Bash Fall Festival



III. **Volunteer Expectations**

Confidentiality Policy

The Young Women's Resource Center affirms the right of its participants to receive services without fear of disclosure to other organizations, agencies, or individuals. No information shall be disclosed to any individual or agency regarding a participant without express written consent from the participant.

Volunteer Code of Ethics

This code of ethics encompasses our organizational standards for all volunteers who interact with participants and staff.

As a volunteer at the Young Women's Resource Center, my goal is to uphold and honor the mission of the agency. I will:

- Maintain the best interest of participants regarding support and services provided
- Acknowledge and remain aware of the power my role gives me with participants
- Respect the physical safety of clients, staff, and other volunteers
- Strive to minimize the impact of the power differentiation
- Hold myself accountable to the volunteer work and time that I have committed to
- Cancel or reschedule my volunteer shift when feeling ill or diagnosed with a contagious illness
- Care for myself and my mental health as a component of being a responsible volunteer and community member.

Volunteer Signature _____ Date: _____

Volunteer Coordinator Signature _____ Date: _____

Dress Code

We encourage volunteers to consider their task when choosing attire. We recommend comfortable or casual clothes conducive to the assigned task as volunteer opportunities could be indoor and/or outdoor. Gloves, cleaning supplies, and materials needed to complete projects will be provided.

Social Media Policy

The YWRC encourages the responsible use of social media. Inappropriate use of photography or social media can pose risks to participants' safety and well-being. Volunteers



may not take photos of participants for social media, or any other use, unless previously approved by the Senior Director of Communications. There is a zero-tolerance policy on the use of personal social media to share pictures, videos, or identifying information of participants taken by volunteers, regardless of intended audience. Use of social media while volunteering should be kept to a minimum.

Volunteers are welcome to share content published on the YWRC's social media accounts as long as it is done so in a positive way and without participant identifying information. Volunteers may share about their volunteer experience on their social media platforms without participants or any identifying information.

IV. YWRC Safety Standards

Federal Volunteer Protection Act

The Federal Volunteer Protection Act (VPA), enacted in 1997, prevents individuals, nonprofit organizations, and government entities engaged in volunteer service from being held liable for harm caused by acts or omissions if the volunteer acted within their scope of responsibilities, was properly qualified, and did not intend to cause harm.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The YWRC is committed to maintaining an environment free from any illegal discrimination or harassment and maintains a strict policy that prohibits such discrimination or harassment in any form. Specifically, the YWRC prohibits the use in the workplace of racial or sexual epithets or stereotypes, slang words or names, or any other language or actions which, by their nature or effect, degrade or insult a person, or any group of persons.

Emergency Procedures

The YWRC strives to ensure a safe space. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to adhere to the following:

- Work according to good safety practices as posted, as instructed in the Emergency Preparedness Manual
- Refrain from any unsafe act that might endanger oneself, the people served, or co-employees.
- Use all safety devices distributed for their protection
- Report any unsafe acts or situations immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator or assigned staff member.



Reporting Accidents or Injuries

If you are subject to accident or injury while volunteering, report the situation to the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. If the matter is urgent, report to any YWRC staff member immediately.

Suspected Abuse or Illegal Activity

If you have reason to believe a YWRC staff member, co-volunteer, or participant is engaged in an illegal activity, or in an unsafe situation, report this information immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. It is defined as: "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." Sexual harassment is illegal when submission to, or reflection of, such conduct is used as a term or condition of volunteering, or is used as a basis for volunteer decisions. Conduct which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a volunteer's work performance in creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment is also illegal.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Requesting or offering sexual favors in return for job benefits;
- Repeated acts of cornering, patting, pinching, or brushing up against a person's body that is sexual in nature;
- Open speculation or repeated inquiries about a person's sex life;
- Jokes, remarks, or innuendoes that are sexual in nature about a person or group of people based on gender; or
- Displaying of sexually explicit material in the workplace.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Non-Smoking Policy

The Young Women's Resource Center is a non-smoking environment. Use of illegal drugs and alcohol are prohibited while on premises or during volunteer shifts. Volunteers found under the influence on Young Women's Resource Center premises will be terminated immediately.



V. Supervision and Support

Grievances and Leave

We appreciate and encourage volunteer feedback including grievances. If a volunteer feels they are being treated unfairly, or has a formal complaint to lodge, they are invited to speak to the Volunteer Coordinator, or the HR Director of the Young Women's Resource Center. Having a transparent discussion of grievances should result in a positive, Trauma Informed, and satisfactory outcome.

If you need to leave your Young Women's Resource Center volunteering position for an extended period, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator of the intended timeline. We are happy to have volunteers return after an extended leave. Please reconnect with the Volunteer Coordinator for upcoming opportunities.

Termination, Resignation, and Exit Interview

Volunteers who have been terminated will receive notification of their status and are encouraged to complete an exit interview.

Volunteers who are choosing to leave the Young Women's Resource Center are encouraged to complete an exit interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.