

The Community Kitchen Inc.



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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VOLUNTEER • HANDBOOK



The Community Kitchen is an equal opportunity provider.

WELCOME



First, we'd like to say THANK YOU! Our volunteers are what keep The Community Kitchen running, and we're not exaggerating. Volunteer hours at The Community Kitchen equate to 6 full-time staff members working 12,385 hours! There is always something to be done when you're here!

We hope you enjoy your time as a volunteer & share those experiences with others.

*Sincerely,
The Community Kitchen staff*

You have made a fantastic decision to volunteer with The Community Kitchen! You are about to embark on a journey that will help feed 3,400 hungry children, seniors, and adults across Cheshire County and beyond. Your generous gift of time and energy is deeply appreciated, and you should give yourself a huge pat on the back as you're fighting for those facing food insecurity in our community (which is no easy feat)

Hunger can happen to anyone. In fact, some of the very same people who give during good times also have times of need themselves. By volunteering, you've joined our exclusive group of hunger relief workers, making you an integral part of our community's safety net. This safety net allows The Community Kitchen to function at its best and provide food to those in need throughout the entire year.

You are making a difference... doesn't it feel amazing?!

.....
"Food security is a human right and a human need and The Community Kitchen fills that need in this community. I want to do a small part to help by volunteering and collecting donations."

5 BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Our mission is simple—to end hunger in our community—how we accomplish it is not. As a volunteer, you are a vital part of our operation. Every month we rely on your generous support, which would otherwise require the work of 45 full-time employees. Here are a few reasons we think volunteering is important and worthwhile:

1. Doing good is good for your health! Volunteering is a remedy for stress, anger, and anxiety.
2. Volunteering expands your social circle. You meet people who share a common interest—the desire to make the world a better place—so making new friends is easy!
3. Volunteering can advance your career. You practice important skills used in the workplace such as teamwork, communication and problem-solving! Plus, it connects you with your community.
4. Volunteering boosts your self-esteem. Volunteering provides you with a sense of purpose and pride. The more you give back to others, the more pleased you become with yourself.
5. Volunteering allows you to make a real difference in your community. Every piece of produce you glean, every can of food you pack, and every grocery box you distribute helps feed those facing hunger.



Values:

Dignity: The Community Kitchen upholds the dignity of all people. We are committed to treating all people who engage with our organization in any way with respect, empathy, kindness, non-judgment, and confidentiality. We are committed to deepening our understanding and manifesting the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Integrity: The Community Kitchen values integrity as a key ingredient to our ability to achieve our mission. We value the trust placed in us by our guests, supporters, community, and partners, and we strive to meet that trust with reliability, consistency, and the highest standards and quality of work, from food delivery to program development to effective organization and advocacy.

Teamwork: We believe in the power of effective teamwork to achieve everything we do, from our daily tasks to our ambitious mission. We value positivity, helpfulness, interdependence, and solidarity in our work with staff, volunteers, guests, supporters, and community partners.

Sustainability: We value sustainability in our business, our operations, and our impact on our community, our food systems, and our environment. We lean into our adaptability, resourcefulness, and innovation to achieve a sustainable business with a lasting positive impact on the ability of all residents of our region to shape their food system and access good food into the future.

O u r S t o r y

The Community Kitchen was established in Keene, NH in 1983 to ensure that everyone in the community would enjoy the basic human dignity of having access to enough food to eat. For over forty years, the organization has offered our neighbors hot meals and take-home groceries along with fellowship, resources referrals, education, and advocacy in support of food security for all. Our current programs serving the Monadnock Region are Hot Meals, Pantry, Mobile Food Pantry, Gleaning, and Advocacy.

RULES & REGULATIONS

We know rules and regulations aren't exactly the most thrilling to read—but they're put in place to keep you safe, happy, and healthy. Plus, they'll help you understand what to expect at your volunteer shift!

General Dos and Don'ts

- **DO** arrive on time and plan to stay for the entirety of the shift (unless prior arrangements have been made).
- **DO** check in upon arrival and wait for instructions (even if you are a regular volunteer and know the routine).
- If you need something signed for school, **DO** have the form filled out before handing it to a staff member.
- **DO** act with respect and courtesy toward fellow volunteers, staff, and guests.
- **DO** abide by the safety protocol of the department in which you are volunteering in order to maintain the safety of yourself, the food, and those around you.
- **DO** respect the donation. Handle the items with the same care as if they are coming to your home.
- **DON'T** eat the donations. If you are in need food, please visit our pantry or ask a staff member. We don't want anyone going hungry and are always happy to help.
- **DON'T** disrupt normal operations. Any volunteer that disrupts normal operation will be asked to leave.
- When at distribution sites, **DON'T** open or remove plastic wrapping on food until directed to do so by the The Community Kitchen staff.
- **DON'T** come to a volunteer shift if you are ill or have been around someone who is ill
- **DON'T** throw away the food. (our food disposal policy)
- **DO** report any problems, or safety issues to a staff member.
- **DO** bring children, as long as they are accompanied by an adult at all times. Individuals over the age of age 17 may volunteer independently, with written permission from a parent or guardian.
- **DO** cancel your shift ahead of time if you are unable to attend.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

TCK offers supplemental groceries including staples such as bread, shelf-stable groceries, protein, fresh produce, and eggs and dairy whenever possible. Pantry Distributions are distributed to Guests based on household size and the number of school-aged children, providing the equivalent of 9 meals per person, per household, per week. Two General Distributions are held each week: Drive-Through/Pre-Pack Distributions on Wednesdays distribute pre-bagged groceries for Guest convenience, while Walkthrough Distributions on Thursdays are set up market-style to allow Guests to choose specific items. Specialized Distributions are offered to approximately 40 additional households a week, utilizing Volunteers or community partners to deliver food directly to Guests who are unable to make it in themselves. In 2024, the Pantry Program served an average of 350 to 375 families a week. The Pantry Program is supported by 3 Staff and between 20-30 Volunteers weekly.

Wednesdays drive-thru 12:30pm-5:30pm
Thursdays walk-thru from 11:30am-4:00pm.

How to Help:

- *WEDNESDAY PANTRY:* Prepare produce, bread & grocery bags during drive-thru pantry > 9am-12pm or 1:00pm – 4pm
- *THURSDAY WALK-THRU PANTRY:* Hand out produce, bread, grocery or meat to walk-thru guests. > 10:00am – 1:00pm or 1:00pm – 4pm
- *THURSDAY DELIVERIES:* Delivered to individuals unable to pick up their own groceries. Requires lifting up to 40Lbs & ability to climb stairs.

Pantry Volunteer Position Description:

Your Role: Organize and sort nutritious foods throughout the week for distribution on: Wednesday and Thursday pantry, agency pick-up and home delivery.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities:

- Sort and organize donated produce, bread, dry grocery, and meat/protein items.
 - Build to-go grocery bags for Wednesday's drive-through pantry.
 - Staff food distribution line during Thursday's walk-through pantry. Ensuring correct quantity and quality per family.
 - Build food boxes for delivery to homebound guests.
 - Clean and sanitize workspace, sweep, and spot mop.
 - Assist other volunteers as needed.
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- Please let us know if you have any physical restrictions on your volunteer form.

Kitchen Prep Volunteer:

Your Role: Assist with daily prep of nutritious foods for the chef to use in Hot Meals recipes.

- Reporting to hot meals manager at the beginning of a shift.
- Washing cutting, peeling and prepping produce as instructed.
- Cutting bread, counting rolls and preparing desserts.
- Sectioning protein into 4 oz portions.
- Sanitize and sweep up workstations after each task.
- Any other preparatory work and tasks assigned by manager.

Meal Service Volunteer:

Your Role: To serve nutritious meals for dinner and assist in daily cleanup for closing.

Times for volunteering are 4:30-6:45 each week night.

- Greet guests in a friendly and welcoming manner.
- Serve proper portioned servings from the line to guests.
- Notify supervisor as serving pans run low.
- Clean up service line, wipe and sanitize dining room table and chairs.
- Move dirty dishes to the kitchen and put away clean dishes.
- Sweep and mop the floor at the end of the shift.
- Arrange the tables and chairs, including placing salt and pepper shakers as well as any other item needed on the tables.

Kids at TCK:

The Community Kitchen welcomes volunteer participation from volunteers of any age, within certain parameters for the health & safety of all. Children 17 or older are welcome to volunteer independently with written permission from a parent or guardian. Children under 16 may volunteer alongside a parent or guardian.

*Under no circumstances can a volunteer under 18 work with knives or close to heating elements.

Adult/Child Photographic Release: The Community Kitchen may only take video or photographs of those parties who have indicated their consent to such filming on their volunteer registration form. Giving this consent releases The Community Kitchen from any liability in connection with the use of these photographic materials.

(If you would like to Photograph the group you are volunteering with, please be mindful of other volunteers and guests. Always ask permission if someone else is in the photograph. We ask that you respect the guests and space you are in.)



Mobile Pantry

How to Help: The goal of this Program is to provide food support to residents of the Monadnock Region who may have transportation issues or other barriers that prevent them from accessing food at TCK or other area food sources. TCK secures and transports food to participating communities and provides farmers' market-style distributions providing a similar range of food items to our General Pantries. TCK specifically purchases produce, protein, and egg items from local NH farms and producers to provide Guests with high-quality food while supporting our local economy. Local agencies are also invited to table at these Distributions to share additional resources with Guests. Past partner communities include Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Richmond, Winchester, Antrim, and Nelson. In 2024, TCK began piloting a new model of the Program where food items are delivered directly to community partners to distribute independently with technical support from TCK Staff. In 2024, 797 individuals accessed TCK Mobile Food Pantry Distributions. The Mobile Pantry Program is supported by 4 staff members and volunteers from participating communities.

Get out in the community and help distribute fresh produce, healthy groceries, and staple pantry items at one of The Community Kitchen's distribution sites. You may be packing boxes on site, helping seniors lift boxes into their cars, directing traffic, or assisting with sign-in. Eligible volunteers are allowed to pick up their food provision 15 minutes before the distribution starts. Volunteers must be able to lift 15-35 lbs. Children can volunteer with an adult, 14 and up can volunteer independently. Though you may only come once, we do love a commitment at our distribution sites, so please feel free to keep coming back. Please email volunteer@thecommunitykitchen.org if you are interested.

If you are interested in seeing our operation off site. We have a Mobile Pantry offered a few times a year. Mobile pantry allows us to offer food to those who are outside of Keene and more rural and often underserved areas of Cheshire County.

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Volunteer hours:

Volunteer opportunities in the pantry are available for

Sorting/bagging Monday through Thursday from 9:30AM-12PM.

Distribution Wednesdays or Thursdays from 10AM-4PM.

Deliveries Thursdays from 9AM-10AM.

Opportunities in the kitchen are available for

Kitchen prep Monday through Friday from 10:30AM-1PM and 1PM-3PM.

Hot Meals Serving and Cleanup Monday through Friday from 4:30PM-6:45PM.

Photo Policy with groups:

If you would like to Photograph the group you are volunteering with, please be mindful of other volunteers and guests. Always ask permission if someone else is in the photograph. We ask that you respect the guests and space you are in.

No Show, or Changes Policy for groups:

1. *Cancellations/Changes:* Cancellations or significant changes to your group size (reducing the number of volunteers by 20% or more) must be communicated at least 7 days before your scheduled shift.
2. *Fees for Late Cancellations or No-Shows:* If your group cancels with less than 7 days notice or fails to bring the expected number of volunteers, a donation of \$20 per absent volunteer per scheduled hour may be requested to help cover the operational costs incurred to accommodate your group's reservation.

Please find a step by step process for signing up with your group and creating your account with **Causer** on page 13.

SUPER VOLUNTEER?

If you enjoy volunteering on a regular basis and would be interested in taking on a leadership role, consider becoming one of our "Super Volunteers." These volunteers generally help with leading a shift and provide support to our Volunteer Coordinator. Please email volunteer@thecommunitykitchen.org if you are interested.

Attendance & punctuality:

Please be sure to arrive on time or give the Volunteer Coordinator as much notice as possible if you cannot make it for a scheduled shift. Unforeseen circumstances of course occur in all our lives, and we greatly appreciate the time that each of our volunteers dedicates to our organization. However, we wouldn't want to let anyone down and do rely on a set number of volunteers for each shift.

*If you are volunteering as part of a group, notify your group leader if you are unable to be here for your shift



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Here at The Community Kitchen we want to provide the best environment for all. In the spirit of community, there are many ways to ensure this is a healthy and healing environment. We do however have a number of regulations that we need to be followed to keep this space a great experience for us all.

***NOTE: The policies in this handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of The Community Kitchen. We will notify you of these changes in writing or by e-mail. Changes will be effective on dates determined by The Community Kitchen. ***

Dress Code

Feel free to dress comfortably. Keep in mind that you may not want to wear your favorite clothes, since the work is sometimes messy.

- Sturdy, comfortable, and closed-toed shoes are required. No sandals or open-toe shoes of any kind will be allowed due to safety regulations.
- Dress comfortably and in layers—the warehouse can be chilly, but you may warm up once you start moving!
- You may find merchandise through our store for all Volunteers. If you are volunteering in the kitchen there are aprons and headwear available for use.
- For Kitchen volunteers, you must wear your hair back. As well as a hair covering of some kind, we will provide hats for hot meal serving, or you can bring your own.
- For Mobile Pantry Distribution volunteers, hats and sunscreen are recommended.

The following is not permitted.

- Top: tank, halter or crop tops or anything with inappropriate pictures/language.
- Bottom: short shorts, cut-offs, pants w/ holes.
- Shoes: mud caked, dirty shoes/boots, flip flops, open-toed sandals, or high heels.
- Hair: must be pulled back & secured tightly. Hats must be worn if working around the food preparation area or serving.

Severe Weather Conditions

TCK's offices and programs will be open except in cases of extreme weather. Volunteers scheduled during these shifts will receive notice through a call and/or email. As always, please call if you are unable to come in due to conditions.



Physical Restrictions

For everyone's well-being, please note any physical limitations on your volunteer form. If any limitations arise, please notify the volunteer coordinator so that they may be recorded and/or updated in the volunteer system. We also need you to advocate for yourself. If you are asked to do more than you feel you are able, and if any incidents/fatigue arise during your shift, please notify a supervisor promptly. If accommodation is needed, we will make necessary adjustments to the best of our ability.

Health & Safety

- Always wash hands at the start and end of every shift. If you are sorting fresh rescue, assisting in the kitchen or serving you must wear gloves. If you handle your phone or switch tasks gloves must be changed.
- Aprons and caps must be removed before using the restroom and placed on the hooks outside.
- Stay hydrated! Bring your own water bottle.
- Please leave personal items at home or in the car. We have a coat closet for use by volunteers. The Community Kitchen is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- Always remain in your designated work area.
- Volunteers must not report to their shift under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Any injuries must be reported immediately to a TCK employee.
- Use proper lifting techniques when lifting heavy objects. Use your legs to push upwards, keep your back straight and your body balanced. Ask for help from another volunteer or staff member to lift heavy items. We have lift belts available if needed.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 are not allowed to use knives, may not serve from the hot bar or use the conveyer belt in the warehouse.
- If you are unsure of any procedure, please always feel free to ask! We would rather you ask than risk being injured.
- We need a form filled out by each volunteer due to liability reasons. We recognize this may seem like a lot, but it helps us, and we appreciate everything every one of our volunteers does.



Sexual Harassment

It is the responsibility of all TCK staff and volunteers to assure that the workplace is free from sexual harassment. The Community Kitchen strongly disapproves of offensive language and inappropriate sexual behavior at work. All volunteers and employees must avoid any language, action, or conduct which could be view as sexual harassment.

*Any volunteer who feels he/she is a victim of sexual or other unlawful harassment should report the act directly to the Volunteer & Guest Services Coordinator. If you prefer not to discuss the situation with the Volunteer & Guest Services Coordinator, then you may report the incident directly to the Executive Director. Supervisors who become aware of harassing conduct and/or a complaint of harassment must report the conduct and/or complaint to the Director of Operations.

Conflict resolution

In the event a conflict arises involving guests, volunteers &/or staff, please report it to staff immediately. Any aggression, verbal or physical, will not be tolerated. If faced with unpleasant behavior, we expect anyone representing TCK in any way to refrain from reactionary or retaliatory behaviors & to employ de-escalation tactics.

Group Sign Up Process

If you would like to be involved in serving dinners with the kitchen, we ask that any group contact the volunteer coordinator at dswanson@thecommunitykitchen.org. We require groups sizes to be at least 4 people as this allows for a person to be at station as well as running dishes and aiding in the breakdown at the end of your shift. We politely ask that you remain until the end of your shift as we can't have anyone leaving early this is not fair to your group or our guests. Most groups that serve with us have at least one assigned day of the week. If you would like to volunteer with an organization after you are assigned a day, you can request the schedule to be emailed for the year. Any organization sign up we ask you to provide a representative as it is this person who will be the point of contact with our volunteer coordinator. Please note that due to the required number of at least 4 volunteers if you do not have the number it is your responsibly to find replacements.

You can register a team with [Causer](#). We ask that you register as the organization you are volunteering for.

*Note: please include a point of contact for a representative of your organization who will be the point person for all communications between.

In the case of school groups or any volunteer who is under the age of 17 we require an adult to be present for the entirety of their shift. Please note that anyone under the age of 18 will need the signature of a legal guardian on their volunteer application. Even in the case of a group we will still require a volunteer form for each member of the group.

How to sign up with **Causer**:

1. Log in or create a Galaxy Digital account.
2. Click on *Opportunities* and click on the Distribution Center Volunteer.
3. Read the description and select a shift time that fits your team → *Respond as Team*.
4. Type your Team's name and click *Add Me* → Assign yourself as a leader (this will give you the ability to edit your team after registering for a shift).
5. *Add Volunteer if you know they have an account (You can invite people without accounts later in the process → Continue*
6. Confirm the shift date and time you originally selected → *Finish (Not done yet!)*
7. In the upper right hand corner of the web page, click on your initials and scroll down to *My Teams*.
8. *My Team page → Manage Team*
9. *Reserve Slots for team members without an account → Update*.
10. *Copy Join Link* → Send link to the additional team members via email.
11. The link will prompt them to join the team if they have an account or prompt them to create an account and join the team if they are new to Galaxy Digital (all volunteers must join their team to confirm their spot).
12. Periodically go back to your My Team's Page to see who has joined your team.

Dress code for groups:

if you would like you would like to wear anything with your organization on it that is great! We always appreciate organizations represented when volunteering with us!

Special events sign up:

Periodically we have a need for large groups with special events if you would like to volunteer for an event (example our harvest dinner) we always welcome large groups for these. The same policies apply. Please indicate if any interest you have in particular opportunities. In the case you are unable to do a regular volunteer shift, these are a great way for large groups to participate with us.





Parking

- Parking spaces for volunteers are located in front of the building, if these are full, we ask that you park on Washington street which has free daily parking as the spots across from our building are metered.
- Mobile pantry volunteers will be given instructions depending on the distribution site.

Personal belongings

TCK has designated a small closet for hanging jackets. Note that it is not monitored or locked & is limited in capacity.

Smoking policy

Smoking is not allowed within 25 feet of any doorway. Please dispose of trash properly.

Community Kitchen food

The Community Kitchen receives donations from a variety of sources to be distributed to our guests. We do not allow volunteers to take any of the items intended for distribution. If you are in need of food assistance, you are welcome & encouraged to register as a guest.

***TCK has a zero-tolerance theft policy.**

Community Service

We require that anyone looking for community service hours bring their paperwork for the offense with them before they will be accepted. You are responsible for tracking your hours and we can only offer sign offs. Under no circumstances can we accept any volunteer who has been charged with a felony, drug distribution, sales, violent or sex crimes of any kind. We understand serving the community can be a healing experience and for this reason the safety and comfort of our volunteers is of the utmost importance to our staff and other volunteers. Failure to disclose any of the items mentioned above will result in immediate dismissal from volunteering.

VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

We value and respect our volunteers and their feedback. If there is an aspect of your volunteer experience that could be improved and benefit The Community Kitchen, please share with our Volunteer Coordinator dswanson@thecommunitykitchen.org. Feedback is essential to ensure that all our volunteers feel welcomed and respected. We could not do this without the assistance of our 350 volunteers, please share how you think we could improve.

Signing in/out

Volunteers are required to sign in & out at the start of their shift at the sign-in station. Not only does knowing who is in the building at any given time support safety, The Community Kitchen (& ultimately our guests) benefits in a variety of ways from accurately assessing & demonstrating our volunteer needs/utilization. (Please sign in at the volunteer kiosk that is by the door. Once you have filled out the paperwork you will be given a profile in our application that records the shifts you work. If you would like a copy of your volunteer resume, please ask the volunteer coordinator how to download this from the application.

Equal opportunity

At The Community Kitchen, we do not discriminate against any volunteer on the basis of age, race, color, creed, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or national origin.

Phone usage

Please either turn your phone off or set it to vibrate while on shift.

*New gloves are required if they touch your phone.

Building security

All TCK entrances are locked throughout the day. Please ring the bell next to the front or back pantry door to be let in.





TCK's Advocacy Program centers on the idea that food charity organizations can and should support our guests in advocating for changes to those aspects of our food systems that contribute to the root causes of hunger. In collaboration with local and statewide community partners, we endeavor to facilitate the knowledge & empowerment of our guests to advocate for themselves and their peers.

Do you have other talents or skills you'd like to contribute?

TCK collaborates with local gardens, markets, and farms to collect surplus produce that might otherwise go to waste. TCK gleans local growing fields and collects donations from local producers. This surplus is then distributed to our guests through our Pantry and Hot Meals Programs. Our goal is to increase the availability of healthy and locally sourced fresh produce within our community and to reduce food waste. TCK partners with NH Gleans, a statewide network dedicated to gleaning efforts across New Hampshire. The Gleaning Program is supported by 1 seasonal staff member and a team of volunteers throughout the growing season. Let us know if you have other skills as well such as:

Office Assistance * Fundraising * Special Events *

Board Committee Membership: Programs, Governance, Building, Safety, Finance

We need a form filled out by each volunteer due to liability reasons. We recognize this may seem like a lot but it helps us and we appreciate everything every one of our volunteers does. By volunteering you get to be a part of making sure that no one in the Monadnock Community and beyond has to struggle with food insecurity.

If you have any questions, please always feel free to reach out to our volunteer coordinator.

Thank you from the entire staff at The Community Kitchen!



Volunteer Coordinator -

Dan Swanson, 603-352-3200, ext. 413
 dswanson@thecommunitykitchen.org
 Volunteer@thecommunitykitchen.org
 or
 Peggy Higgins 603-353-3200 ext.419
 phiggins@thecommunitykitchen.org

Download the Causer App



Social Media -

Please use our hashtags
 #TCK #TheCommunityKitchenInc
 when posting about us!

Facebook -

@TheCommunityKitchenKeene
 Like and follow us on Facebook, check
 in and tag us when volunteering!
 Email photos from your volunteer
 shifts to
 ablake@thecommunitykitchen.org or
 dswanson@thecommunitykitchen.org

Instagram -

@thecommunitykitcheninc

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING