



# **Coachella Valley Rescue Mission Volunteer Handbook**

July 2026

Thank you so much for your interest in serving at the Mission. We are grateful that you have decided to spend some of your time helping the hungry and hurting of our community. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance and direction to those generously donating their time and/or talents at the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission. We appreciate your participation and thank you for the positive impact you will have on the lives of those we serve. Hopefully, your life will be equally blessed.

This packet will provide you with all of the information needed to get you started as a Mission volunteer.

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# **Coachella Valley Rescue Mission**

## **Mission Statement**

"To serve those in need by sharing the saving grace of Jesus Christ through the provision of food, shelter, clothing, and spiritual recovery."

## **Vision Statement**

As ministers of reconciliation, we are to facilitate the reconciliation of men and women to God, to themselves, and to society.

Those in need of recovery due to loss of job, home, health, emotional, mental, or spiritual support, or physical or substance abuse find themselves drawn to our ministry. We are to facilitate that reconciliation through the available means of this Mission, i.e., food, clothing, shelter, counseling, and discipleship. Through these modalities, we pave the way for them to be reconciled.

Since 1971, Coachella Valley Rescue Mission has been an oasis, a place of refuge for the homeless and needy in our valley. We are a safe haven, a place of rest for the weary, and a place where daily physical and spiritual needs may be met.

Over the years, the mission has continued to meet the ever-growing needs of individuals who, for a variety of reasons, have found themselves without the basic necessities of life. Dedicated staff and volunteers serve more than 340,000 meals annually and provide shelter to thousands of men and women with children. Food, clothing, and showers are also provided for those who choose not to shelter with us.

# 1. Volunteer Program

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## Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (“CVRM” or the “Mission”). A volunteer must complete the appropriate application to be officially accepted and enrolled by Coachella Valley Rescue Mission before performing the task. The applications will be available online at [www.cvrn.org](http://www.cvrn.org). **All volunteers must fill out the application regardless of the term of service.**

A volunteer is not an employee of CVRM and provides services as a donation, and under no circumstances will wages, salary, or benefits be provided from CVRM for the services provided.

## Group/Student/Corporate Volunteers

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission also accepts volunteers who are participating in church or student community service activities, corporate volunteer programs, and other volunteer referral programs. In each of these cases, however, an application must be filled out, and a special agreement must be in effect with the organization for management and care of the volunteers. **The number of volunteers in a group serving at a time will be limited to the project or area of service and will be determined by the Volunteer Coordinator.**

## Service at the Discretion of Coachella Valley Rescue Mission

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of CVRM. Due to the delicate nature of some clients, volunteers who desire to serve at CVRM are subject to a background check prior to serving, and may be required to complete an additional background check or Live Scan at any point during their service (see Background Checks & Live Scan).

Volunteers agree that CVRM may, at any time and for any reason, decide to end a volunteer's relationship with CVRM. A volunteer may likewise decide, at any time and for any reason, to end their relationship with CVRM. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

## 2. Overview of Volunteer Screening Process

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### **Before volunteering, volunteers are required to complete the following:**

- Understand and adhere to the Volunteer Guidelines and CVRM Volunteer Handbook.
- Complete the online Volunteer Application.
- Complete a background consent form.
- Attend the mandatory in-person orientation.

### **Background Checks & Live Scan**

As part of our commitment to a safe environment, all volunteers are screened through CVRM's in-house background check system before serving, and CVRM may run an additional background check or a Department of Justice Live Scan fingerprint check at any point during a volunteer's service — not only at the time of application. Volunteers in roles with direct contact with, or supervision of, minors (16+ hours a month or 32+ hours a year) are "regular volunteers" under California law (AB 506) and must complete a Live Scan fingerprint-based criminal history check, plus training in child abuse and neglect identification and reporting, before beginning service in that role.

A background check or Live Scan does not automatically disqualify someone from volunteering; CVRM reviews any records individually and fairly, weighing the nature of the offense, how much time has passed, and its relevance to the volunteer role. All background and Live Scan information is kept strictly confidential and shared only with those who need it to make screening decisions. Volunteers who refuse a requested background check or rescreen may have their volunteer service suspended or ended.

## 3. Volunteer Policies

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### **Behavior**

Volunteers are encouraged to maintain a high standard of integrity and professionalism when relating with Mission clients, staff, vendors, board members, and other volunteers.

Volunteers are not to fraternize with Mission Clients. Volunteers should always be in sight of others.

Volunteers are not to initiate physical contact with Mission clients, staff, vendors, board members, or any other person on the CVRM premises. Inappropriate physical contact or any form of sexual harassment will be grounds for immediate termination of volunteer service (see Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment).

Volunteers are to treat all individuals — clients, staff, vendors, board members, and other volunteers — with respect, courtesy, and fairness.

Volunteers are asked to abide by the organizational policies and rules and report any unethical behavior to their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers must be reliable and fulfill their commitments and duties to the best of their ability.

## **Confidentiality**

CVRM has an obligation to its clients to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every person served by CVRM has the right to confidentiality. Volunteers must not disclose, copy, misuse, or release any confidential or private client information they may observe or have access to during the course of volunteering with CVRM. Volunteers may not share personal details such as their own home address or phone/cell number with Mission clients.

All personal information about Mission Clients is strictly confidential, except where a client shares information involving legal consequences, such as being in danger or endangering others. In these situations, volunteers must report the information to their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

## **Social Media**

As a volunteer, what you post on your personal social media accounts can reflect on CVRM, so the following guidelines apply whenever your posts touch on the Mission, its clients, staff, or community.

We want you to help protect our reputation. Volunteers must not post false or defamatory statements about:

- a. CVRM;
- b. CVRM's staff, our clients, volunteers, or board members past or present;
- c. Suppliers and vendors; and
- d. Other affiliates and stakeholders.

This does not limit a volunteer's ability to raise concerns in good faith with their supervisor, the Volunteer Coordinator, or the appropriate regulatory or law enforcement authority. Volunteers should also avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our reputation, even indirectly.

The voice, image, and/or confidential information relating to any CVRM clients, staff, vendors, board members, and other volunteers is not to be shared on any of the volunteer's social media platforms.

## **Conduct**

Our programs are violence-free and drug-free environments. Volunteers are not to be under the influence of alcohol, use drugs, or carry weapons on site (see Health, Safety, and Emergency Procedures).

Volunteers are to engage in gracious and edifying conversation. As a faith-based organization, CVRM asks volunteers not to present or promote a worldview in opposition to the Judeo-Christian faith central to our ministries.

Volunteers are not to engage in a private transaction involving gifts, services, or money with any program participant (see Conflicts of Interest).

Children must be supervised by an accompanying adult at a ratio of 1 to 2. No one less than 4 feet tall is allowed behind the buffet. Chaperones must submit an application and schedule their service alongside the minor they are accompanying.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Volunteers shall avoid personal and professional conflicts of interest in their volunteer duties with CVRM, including financial, personal, or professional relationships that could compromise their judgment. If it's unclear whether a conflict exists, discuss it with your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Gifts to Clients**

Volunteers may not give personal gifts, money, or services directly to a client, or accept them from a client in exchange for service. Gifts for clients must go through your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator for appropriate distribution. This protects volunteer-client boundaries and avoids favoritism toward individual clients.

## **Attendance**

Volunteers are expected to serve as scheduled. If you'll be absent, notify your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator as far in advance as possible. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of your volunteer assignment.

## **Health, Safety, and Emergency Procedures**

CVRM is committed to a clean, hazard-free, and safe environment. Volunteers should follow all safety rules and instructions from their supervisor, use safety equipment where required, and keep their workspace neat and orderly.

CVRM does not permit unauthorized firearms or weapons on CVRM property, including disabling tear gas dispensers, guns, starting or flare pistols, knives with

blades over three (3) inches, or any other object intended for use as a weapon.

First Aid kits are located in the supervisor's office of every building. In a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately. For any accident, injury, or emergency, also notify a staff person as soon as possible. If you are injured, report it to your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible, and complete an accident report following any injury sustained while performing your volunteer duties.

### **Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment**

CVRM does not discriminate against any volunteer or volunteer applicant on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, or veteran status.

CVRM prohibits any form of unlawful harassment based on these same characteristics, in accordance with applicable law, and strives to foster an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Harassment of a CVRM client, staff member, vendor, board member, or volunteer in any form is not permitted and is subject to disciplinary action by CVRM.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any volunteer who believes they have been harassed should immediately notify their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. All complaints and related information will be investigated and kept confidential to the extent possible.

### **Dress Code**

- Closed-toe shoes must be worn in all volunteer positions.
- Long pants are required when volunteering in the kitchen.
- Volunteers must wear clothing that is modest and appropriate for a service environment. Midriff-revealing tops, short shorts, muscle shirts, and tight-fitting clothing are not permitted.
- Clothing worn by volunteers must not portray alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, or sexual or violent themes.
- Dangling or loose jewelry should be removed before arriving.
- Kitchen volunteers may be required to wear a hairnet or baseball cap.

### **Drug-Free Environment**

CVRM strictly prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs, including marijuana/cannabis regardless of its legal status under California law, on CVRM premises or while volunteering.

## 4. Scheduling and Signing in and out Procedures

### Scheduling

To ensure smooth operations and effective coordination, kitchen, and maintenance volunteers must schedule their time in advance using the online volunteer portal's self-scheduling tool.

This tool is available on our website at [www.cvrvm.org](http://www.cvrvm.org) or as an app for iOS or Android called VicNet. Once your volunteer application is approved, more instructions on how to log in will be sent via email.

Scheduling for the kitchen or maintenance must be done at least 24 hours in advance. If you need to cancel or change your shift, you may do so by logging in to the volunteer portal.

*All chaperones must reserve a time with the minor that they are accompanying.*

### Signing in and out

To maintain accurate records of volunteer hours and ensure accountability, **all volunteers** must follow these signing-in and out procedures:

#### 1. Signing In:

- Head to the security window and ask for your volunteer badge. This badge will contain your name and volunteer ID number.
- Sign in using the kiosk located next to the security window. If the screen is not working, please report it to security.

#### 2. Sign Out:

- At the end of your shift please return any materials or equipment used during your shift to their appropriate locations.
- Sign out using the kiosk located next to the security window.

If you are unable to attend your scheduled shift, please make sure to remove yourself from the schedule by going to the online volunteer portal.

For any scheduling or sign-in/out issues, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (760) 347-3512 x223 or [aperez@cvrm.org](mailto:aperez@cvrm.org)

## 5. Adherence to Organizational Needs, Rules, and Policies

As a volunteer of the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, you are expected to comply with and support the organization's needs, rules, and policies. This includes:

- **Following Guidelines:** Adhering to all established guidelines, procedures, and protocols relevant to your role.
- **Supporting Organizational Goals:** Aligning your efforts with the mission, values, and goals of CVRM.
- **Respecting Authority:** Respecting and following instructions from supervisors, staff, and other designated leaders within the organization.
- **Compliance with Policies:** Understanding and complying with all organization policies, including those related to conduct, safety, confidentiality, signing in and out, etc.

All volunteers are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of CVRM. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in the termination of your volunteer service.

### Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteers select their volunteer role based on their own interests, skills, and availability. Supervisors will provide guidance on duties as needed to help volunteers get started in their role. Volunteers may be trusted with confidential information as needed to carry out their duties and are expected to keep it private, protecting CVRM's clients (see Confidentiality).

CVRM expects all volunteers to know their duties, cooperate with staff and fellow volunteers, maintain a good attitude, and treat others with respect.

### Conflict Resolution

Volunteers are encouraged to bring any concerns about their volunteer role, assignment, or general issues to their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. Where a conflict arises over a volunteer's position, behavior, or a general problem, CVRM may request written statements from those involved, reassign the volunteer to a new position, or end the volunteer's service with CVRM. This process addresses general volunteer concerns; harassment or discrimination complaints are handled under Reporting Procedures.

### Termination and Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to CVRM's rules and procedures, or who cannot satisfactorily or safely perform their assignment (with reasonable accommodation considered where applicable), may be subject to dismissal. Grounds include, but are not limited to: misconduct or insubordination; being under the influence of

alcohol or drugs while volunteering; theft, including of food or donated items; misuse of CVRM equipment; and abuse or mistreatment of clients, staff, vendors, board members, or other volunteers.

## 6. Hold Harmless

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***CVRM does not provide Worker's Compensation Insurance for volunteers.***

### Hold Harmless

Volunteers will not hold CVRM responsible for any medical or accidental claims. The volunteer agrees to waive and release any and all claims against Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (CVRM) and its officers, agents, servants, and employees arising from injury, damage, or loss the volunteer sustains while performing volunteer services.

In the event of an emergency, the volunteer authorizes CVRM to secure treatment from a licensed hospital, physician, or medical personnel as deemed necessary for the volunteer's immediate care, and agrees to be responsible for payment of any medical services rendered.

### Personal Property

CVRM is not responsible for the personal property of volunteers.

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## 7. Individual Compliance Agreement

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*The compliance agreement is signed electronically when the volunteer submits Coachella Valley Rescue Mission online volunteer applications. Volunteers must sign this page during orientation and turn it into the Volunteer Coordinator.*

I, the volunteer, confirm that I have read the Volunteer Handbook, attended orientation, and understand its terms. I have had the time and opportunity to read and ask questions regarding the Volunteer Handbook and this Agreement. I agree to abide by all rules and guidelines contained within them, including the Model Release (page 14), which I have signed separately. By signing this Agreement I am giving up substantial legal rights I might otherwise have, and I confirm I am at least 18 years of age and I have made this agreement knowingly and voluntarily without any inducements. If I am chaperoning for a minor, I confirm my signature also covers that minor volunteer for purposes of this Agreement, and I will go over these terms and policies with the minor volunteer before the first day of service.

Volunteer's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Volunteer Printed Name (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Group Compliance Agreement

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*The compliance agreement is signed electronically when the volunteer submits Coachella Valley Rescue Mission online volunteer applications. Volunteers must sign this page during orientation and turn it into the Volunteer Coordinator.*

As the designated group leader, I, the volunteer, confirm that I have read the Volunteer Handbook, attended orientation, and understand its terms. I have had the time and opportunity to read and ask questions regarding the Volunteer Handbook and this Agreement. I agree to abide by all rules and guidelines contained within them, including the Model Release (page 14), which I have signed separately for my own participation. By signing this Agreement (when submitting my volunteer application), I am giving up substantial legal rights I might otherwise have, and I confirm I am at least 18 years of age and I have made this agreement knowingly and voluntarily without any inducements. Furthermore, I agree to ensure my group has a thorough understanding of the Mission's volunteer policies, including the Model Release, and to provide the Volunteer Coordinator with a list of my group members' names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses (if needed) before beginning our volunteer assignment.

Group Name \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Volunteer Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Model Release

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In consideration of being permitted to volunteer with Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, I give CVRM, and those working on CVRM's behalf, permission to photograph me and to use, copyright, and publish those photographs — including in composite or altered form and with my name or a fictitious name — for art, advertising, trade, or any other lawful purpose, in any media.

I release CVRM from liability for any blurring, distortion, alteration, or use in composite form, intentional or otherwise, occurring in the taking or processing of these photographs. I may revoke this consent for future use at any time by notifying CVRM in writing; this will not affect materials already published. If I am a minor, my parent or legal guardian must also sign below.

Volunteer's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature (required if volunteer is a minor):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_