VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Mission

NDUEC provides transformative educational experiences to impact individual wellbeing.

Vision

To awaken and support one's passion for life-long learning.

14 E. 8th Street
Covington, KY
2026-2027 Edition

Welcome to the Notre Dame Urban Education Center!

Congratulations on beginning your volunteer journey with us. As Lao Tzu said, *"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."* By choosing to serve, you have taken that first step on a path that will enrich not only the lives of the children and families you support, but your own as well.

Since our founding in 2009 and the launch of our first programs in 2010, volunteers have been at the heart of NDUEC. Your generosity, compassion, and commitment make it possible for us to provide transformative educational experiences that empower children and strengthen families.

Whether you are tutoring a student, encouraging a child, assisting with enrichment activities, or simply offering a listening ear, your presence matters. Every interaction helps build confidence, inspire hope, and reinforce the belief that every child can succeed.

We are deeply grateful that you have chosen to share your time and talents with NDUEC. Together, we are creating opportunities, building relationships, and making a lasting difference in our community.

This handbook is designed to guide you as you begin your volunteer experience and to answer many of the questions you may have. We hope it serves as a helpful resource throughout your time with us.

Thank you for partnering with the Notre Dame Urban Education Center and continuing the legacy of the Sisters of Notre Dame. May God bless you and all that we accomplish together.

With gratitude,

Erin Woods
Executive Director

NDUEC NOTRE DAME URBAN EDUCATION CENTER

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States of America are members of an international congregation of over 1800 women in eighteen countries. They are consecrated for mission in the Catholic Church to serve people, especially those who experience poverty in its various forms through education and other ministries. There are 450+ members in the SNDUSA province. Locally, the Sisters of Notre Dame USA sponsor Notre Dame Academy in Park Hills, KY; Julie Learning Center and St. Charles Care Center in Ft. Wright, KY; Notre Dame Urban Education Center in Covington, KY; and the SND Eastern Kentucky Foundation in Morehead, KY. The sisters have served in education in this area since their arrival in the United States in 1874.

Currently, there is much focus on education in the city of Covington. Using the Covington, Kentucky Education Data charts from 2020, Covington has a High School Graduation rate of 84% while 25% of people living in Covington have a Bachelors' Degree or higher. Therefore, there is a smaller pool of people with higher education in the community. Many adults in poverty are reported to have had a negative experience of school which is often passed from one generation to the next. Early childhood is receiving the strongest focus by the educational community as there is the need to encourage this age population to develop a positive attitude toward school. Another factor leading to the high dropout rate is the fact that many of the children in poverty come from predominately single parent homes. Single mothers try to work and support their children when often they themselves lack basic employment or educational skills. Further, these mothers often lack parenting skills and resources to support their children and to encourage them in their schoolwork.

NDUEC, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame, USA, provides educational support services to individuals and families in urban areas within a faith-based context. Our services offer an integrated approach that strengthens both individuals and families. We hope that participants will develop their talents, continue their education, and contribute to building up the community.

Our transformative educational programs include a strong and effective tutoring component designed to increase success in the classroom. We welcome individuals who wish to collaborate with NDUEC's staff to meet the needs of those we serve. Volunteers play a unique and vital role, either through direct service to the children or by assisting with our mission to help others.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Volunteer Program is to develop and coordinate activities for volunteers that promote and expand Notre Dame Urban Education Center's mission and programs.

- *To assist and support NDUEC* to more effectively serve the educational needs of the children.
- *To provide an environment* in which the skills and interests of the volunteer may be utilized for the benefit of both NDUEC and the volunteer.

The Volunteer Coordinator is the volunteer's representative on staff. The Coordinator is responsible for the operation of the overall volunteer program. This includes recruiting, interviewing, placement, orientation, record-keeping, recognition, and publicity of volunteer activities.

Volunteers are unpaid personnel assigned to various areas of the Center in which they perform needed functions and receive training, support and supervision. The tasks of volunteers are defined by position descriptions.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Administrative Support
Volunteers may provide clerical assistance to the staff and administration. Volunteers serve as receptionists who answer incoming calls as well as greet the children and visitors who come to the Center.

Early Learning
Volunteers assist the children under the direction of the Early Learning teacher with their daily routine.

Homework Plus
Volunteers who participate in the tutoring session commit to remain with NDUEC for a semester at a time. The primary purpose of the tutoring program is to assist the children with their classroom assignments. Volunteer tutors may assist children with computer-based activities and/or play an educational game. NDUEC focuses on the improvement of reading and math skills. Volunteers may assist the enrichment coordinators to instruct and guide the children with the enrichment activities.

Summer Academics
Summer Academics is held during the four weeks in June. The volunteers assist the children to complete their Summer Solution books for math and English.

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VOLUNTEER ESSENTIALS

Appreciation
Notre Dame Urban Education Center recognizes the many gifts that the volunteers bring to the Center throughout the year. The Center shows its appreciation to its volunteers both formally and informally during the year including social media, the Christmas Celebration, the observation of National Volunteer Week in April, and in the Annual Report.

Background Check & Sexual Misconduct
Volunteers, eighteen years of age and older, are subject to a routine background check for the purpose of discovering any record of child abuse, misuse, or endangerment. They also are asked to sign the Diocesan Policy on Sexual Misconduct and are expected to complete the Protecting God's Children training program as well as any on-going training of this nature. All must be Virtus compliant.

Confidentiality
Confidentiality is an essential element in maintaining an effective and successful educational organization. It is imperative that all volunteers keep all written or verbal information concerning the children and their families, obtained either directly or indirectly, strictly confidential. Further, information cannot be sought regarding a child or family unless that information is necessary for the completion of the volunteer's work.

Ending Volunteer Service at NDUEC
If it is necessary for a volunteer to resign for any reason or when a volunteer completes a specific project, the Volunteer Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible. Occasionally it becomes necessary for NDUEC to ask a volunteer to leave because a placement is not suitable or performance is unsatisfactory. Volunteers showing no service time recorded for one year will be automatically retired.

Emergency Procedures
Exits are clearly marked in case of the need for emergency evacuation. If you should see a child or family member, staff person, or other volunteer involved in an accident, do not attempt to move the person or administer first aid. Contact the Program Director or staff personnel.

Facility's Dog
NDUEC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, volunteers, staff, and visitors. To enhance social-emotional well-being within our community, an approved facility dog may be present on campus under the supervision of its trained handler.

Facility's Dog (continued)
The facility dog has been professionally trained in basic obedience and public-access behavior and has demonstrated an appropriate temperament for educational settings. The dog remains current on all vaccinations, preventative veterinary care, and routine health screenings.

Volunteers are expected to interact respectfully with the facility dog and follow staff instructions regarding appropriate interactions.

Grievance
Notre Dame Urban Education Center endeavors to treat volunteers fairly and justly. It is hoped that most disagreements can be resolved in a collective and constructive spirit. The Volunteer Coordinator should be contacted when there is a problem. If the disagreement cannot be resolved through negotiations, the volunteer may submit in writing an appeal to the Executive Director. The volunteer is entitled to a hearing with the Executive Director in the presence of the supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.

Harassment
It is the policy of NDUEC that no volunteer or employee shall be subjected to harassment because of ethnicity, creed, gender, age, physical ability, or sexual orientation. Harassment of this nature is expressly prohibited. Sexual harassment which consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or acts as a condition of continued service, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which interferes with an individual's performance, is expressly prohibited. Any incidents of harassment should be reported to the Executive Director.

Inclement Weather Days
Program delays, cancellations, or closures due to inclement weather will be announced through local television stations and NDUEC's communication channels.

Law Enforcement at NDUEC
If any law enforcement official enters Notre Dame Urban Education Center asking for information with a search warrant or subpoena, you shall notify the Executive Director, or in her absence, the Program Director immediately. You should indicate to the law enforcement official that in accordance with NDUEC policy, you are notifying the Executive Director.

Orientation & Training

All people wishing to volunteer with Notre Dame Urban Education Center are interviewed by the Volunteer Coordinator. At that time, the various opportunities for volunteering at NDUEC will be explored as well as the special interests, skills and abilities of the candidate. This discussion allows for the best possible match between volunteer and position. The potential volunteer is given a tour of the Center with an explanation of the programs and procedures. Introductions to appropriate staff will also occur at this time. The Volunteer Handbook, as well as some practical information, about the Center will be discussed.

Each applicant is expected to complete an information packet which includes a request for references and permission to complete background inquiries as required by law. The Virtus program through the Diocese of Covington must also be completed by all individuals eighteen years of age or older. NDUEC will reimburse applicants for the cost of the background check, provided that NDUEC is selected as the applicant's primary volunteer location and with the understanding that the applicant is making a good-faith commitment to volunteer for at least one year. All information is contained in the volunteer's confidential record which is available to the volunteer upon request.

Parking

Parking is available in the City of Covington's Saratoga Lot, located directly across the street from the Center. NDUEC will collect each volunteer's vehicle license plate number and provide it to the city so designated parking spaces can be authorized for NDUEC volunteers. Volunteers who choose to park on nearby streets are responsible for following all posted parking regulations and restrictions. Several accessible parking spaces are available behind the Center for individuals with valid handicap parking permits or license plates.

Safety & Security

The safety and well-being of every student, volunteer, staff member, and visitor is a top priority at Notre Dame Urban Education Center. NDUEC maintains comprehensive safety procedures to help provide a secure learning environment.

- All exterior doors remain locked during program hours.
- All visitors are required to sign in upon entering the building.
- All students must check in with the receptionist upon arrival each day.
- Security cameras monitor the exterior of the building and surrounding property.
- NDUEC maintains a monitored fire alarm and security system connected to local emergency responders.
- Fire drills are conducted regularly in accordance with state and local regulations. During all emergency evacuations, students are expected to remain calm, follow staff directions, and exit the building in an orderly manner with their volunteer or staff member.

Safety & Security (continued)

- During a Tornado Watch, staff will monitor weather conditions. During a Tornado Warning, all students, volunteers, and staff will move immediately to the designated shelter area on the lower level of the building.
- In the event of a lockdown or other security emergency, students will follow the direction of staff and volunteers, who are trained to implement NDUEC's emergency response procedures until an all-clear is provided by law enforcement or emergency personnel.

Student/Youth Volunteers

Notre Dame Urban Education Center provides volunteer opportunities for students and youths. When the student/youth apply to NDUEC, it is expected that appropriate documentation and orientation will be completed. However, there is no background check completed on students and youths. A permission or release form from the parent/guardian must be completed.

Tax Deductions

Mileage expenses to and from NDUEC as well as any additional mileage expenses incurred while doing NDUEC work may be allowable income tax deductions. There may be other costs incurred because of the responsibilities of a volunteer position that are tax deductible as well. The IRS provides detailed information on allowable deductions for contributed services in the free Publication #526, "Charitable Contributions". A copy of this booklet is on file in the Volunteer Office, or it may be accessed via the Internet. Volunteers are encouraged to seek their own counsel for an opinion as to the eligibility of these deductions.

Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours are tabulated monthly and are kept on file. High school students may request their service hours so they can be reported to their respective high schools. The Program Director signs forms for the high school volunteers. Students wishing to request a recommendation letter must complete a minimum of 60 hours within a two-year period. Students must ask for and complete a recommendation letter request form at least 3 weeks in advance of the letter's deadline.

Volunteer time is valuable in reflecting the participation and accomplishments of the volunteer program. It allows the Board, potential funding organizations, and others to recognize the value of community support given through volunteer service to NDUEC.

Volunteer Records

The Volunteer Coordinator maintains volunteer files: emergency contact information; confidentiality agreement; Virtus documents; and any information pertinent to the volunteer's work. When this information changes, the Volunteer Coordinator needs to be notified immediately.

Rights of the Volunteer

- To be interviewed carefully and appropriately assigned to a meaningful position.
- To receive adequate orientation and training to meet the responsibilities of the position.
- To be given supervision and feedback regarding the volunteer's performance.
- To be given opportunities for growth.
- To be treated with respect.
- To make suggestions.
- To be recognized for service.
- To decline any task with which the volunteer is uncomfortable.
- To contact the Program Director or Volunteer Coordinator if any difficulties are experienced with an assignment.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- Complete the required application paperwork and attend orientation and training sessions. All volunteers must be Virtus compliant.
- Be prompt and dependable. Please notify NDUEC if you cannot keep your scheduled time. Email or voicemail is appreciated.
- Please sign in on arrival.
- To abide by the policies and procedures of NDUEC
- To keep all written or verbal information about the children or families confidential.
- Communicate to the Program Director and Volunteer Coordinator any questions, problems, suggestions and/or concerns the volunteer may have.
- Attend scheduled orientation, training and volunteer presentations.
- Keep personal records, health forms and hours served up to date.
- Contact the Volunteer Coordinator if moving or otherwise leaving volunteer service.
- Never arrive to your volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Using alcohol, drugs or tobacco during your volunteer time is prohibited. Weapons are not permitted on NDUEC's campus.
- Support the work sent by the classroom teacher and staff.
- The volunteer's role is one of assistance.
- Photos will only be taken by staff personnel.
- Volunteers should follow business casual guidelines for dress.
- Volunteers will be shown where personal belongings may be stored; however, NDUEC cannot be held responsible for losses.

Benefits to the Volunteer

- Acquisition of new job skills and valuable experience.
- An environment of mutual support and respect between staff and volunteers.
- Establishment of a record of successful work experience.
- Exposure to the education field.
- Formal recognition for services rendered.
- Opportunity to participate in NDUEC's mission of service.
- Personal development and self-fulfillment.
- Tax deductible cost of transportation to and from NDUEC as well as the cost of other expenses incurred because of volunteer work.
- Written reference if needed for continuing education or employment.

Nondiscrimination Policy

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions, including Notre Dame Urban Education Center, participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Right to Amend

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are intended to provide general guidance for volunteers participating in Notre Dame Urban Education Center programs. NDUEC reserves the right to interpret, modify, amend, suspend, or discontinue any policy or procedure contained in this handbook at any time, with or without prior notice, as circumstances require.

Whenever practical, NDUEC will communicate significant policy changes in a timely manner. By participating in NDUEC programs, volunteers acknowledge their responsibility to become familiar with and comply with the most current policies and procedures.