



NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK

# VOLUNTEER FAQ

**So we can appropriately plan for volunteer projects and ensure a fun and meaningful experience for all volunteers, individuals must schedule their volunteer session at least one week in advance; we recommend groups schedule one month in advance to ensure we can accommodate their group.**

## **Is there a dress code?**

Yes, we recommend dressing comfortably and in layers depending on the season of year. Additionally, volunteers working in our warehouse must WEAR CLOSED-TOE SHOES on the day of your shift. Individuals wearing open-toed shoes such as sandals, flip flops, soccer slides, Crocs, Keens, slippers etc. will not be allowed to work in the warehouse under any circumstances. Also, high heeled shoes are not appropriate in a warehouse setting. Long shorts or pants and t-shirts or sweatshirts are recommended.

## **Can I bring a group?**

Yes, groups are welcome (and encouraged) to volunteer with us. Our volunteer projects can accommodate groups of various sizes and are perfect team-building opportunities. Groups of 20 or more volunteers are asked to contact the Food Bank directly at 630.443.6910 or [volunteer@northernillfoodbank.org](mailto:volunteer@northernillfoodbank.org) to register. To ensure we are able to accommodate your group size, we recommend groups contact our volunteer team at least one month in advance of their proposed group outing.



### **How else can I help?**

Raise funds on behalf of Northern Illinois Food bank by sharing your fundraising page with your volunteer group, friends, family, co-workers, etc. Every \$1 you raise will provide \$8 worth of groceries to neighbors in need. [Click here](#) to get started with your personal Fundraising Page. What you do matters!

### **What are my responsibilities as a Group Leader?**

You are responsible for sending the list of names in an Excel format, communicating guidelines and reminders to your group, and updating the Volunteer Team with any changes to your group registration. We encourage Group Leaders to provide as many email addresses as possible when filling out the excel template. If the participants in your group do not have emails, it is the group leader's responsibility to share information about the upcoming volunteer shift. Additionally, if you know you do not need all of the spaces of your reservation, please let us know immediately so we can release and refill the spaces.

### **Why do I need to send a list of names for my volunteer group in an Excel format?**

By sending a list of names, you provide valuable information to us. The number of expected volunteers helps us determine projects. When you send names and email addresses of those planning to volunteer with your group, it helps us to link those that have volunteered in the past with their volunteer profile in our system. It also allows us access to send out future volunteer needs via email. Excel format is the only file compatible with our system.

### **Can children volunteer at Northern Illinois Food Bank?**

Yes! We welcome children ages 8 and older.

### **Do adults need to accompany children/youth?**

Anyone under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult 21 years of age or older. Children ages 8 and older may volunteer with families or in groups with adult chaperones. Chaperone ratios are 1:4 for ages 8-13 and 1:10 for ages 14-17.



### **Do I need parental consent if I am under 18 years of age?**

Yes, volunteers under the age of 18 will need to have a parent or legal guardian sign the [Volunteer Consent Form](#) and bring it with them to their shift.

### **Can I arrive late for my shift?**

Volunteers must arrive on time in order to participate in pre-shift safety and orientation. We cannot accept volunteers later than 30 minutes. If you anticipate being late, please let us know and we will be happy to reschedule you.

### **Are volunteers required to stay for the entire shift?**

Yes. Our projects are designed for specific time periods so we ask that volunteers commit to the entire shift. For that reason, it is also important you arrive on time. If you are going to be later than 30 minutes or something comes up and need to leave early, our Volunteer Coordinators would be happy to assist you in rescheduling your volunteer shift.

### **Are there any physical requirements?**

The majority of our volunteer opportunities are sorting, inspecting and repacking food for our hungry neighbors. These tasks require some level of physical activity– from simply standing on concrete to actual lifting. If you require special accommodations please contact us at 630.443.6910 before registering.

### **What if I don't want to volunteer in the warehouse?**

We have many opportunities for volunteers to get involved outside of sorting and repacking food. Please visit our [volunteer opportunities page](#) for a list of all our volunteer needs.

### **Is there parking available?**

West Suburban Center (Geneva): Parking in an attached parking lot north of building.

North Suburban Center (Park City): Very limited parking in front of the building, but there is plenty of parking in the back of the building. To access this parking, take the unnamed road just north of Keller Drive to where you see signs for Northern Illinois Food Bank.



Northwest Center (Rockford): Parking in an attached parking lot and on the street where marked.

South Suburban Center (Joliet): Plenty of parking in front of the building.

Please carpool whenever possible.

### **What if I don't have access to an email address?**

Online volunteer registration requires that you have an email address. We encourage you to use the online system because it allows you to register and manage your account independently. If you do not have an email address please contact a member of our volunteer team 630.443.6910 to arrange your volunteer session.

### **Is there an opportunity to volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry?**

Yes! Our network member food pantries and feeding programs also rely on volunteers. Opportunities vary, so please contact a [Northern Illinois Food Bank network member](#) to learn about that program's specific needs.

### **What do we do in the case of inclement weather?**

In the case of inclement weather, please call our Emergency/Weather Advisory Extension by calling 630.443.6910 ext. 183. A message will then advise you of Northern Illinois Food Bank's operational status.

### **Can I complete court-mandated community service hours with Northern Illinois Food Bank?**

A number of adult court-mandated community service hour offenses may be completed by volunteering at the food bank. All individuals with court-mandated community service hours must be at least 16 years old, and must call the volunteer department and leave a message at 630.443.6910, ext. 192 or email [courtcompelled@northernillfoodbank.org](mailto:courtcompelled@northernillfoodbank.org) for further information. You must also complete a [Court Compelled Intake Form](#).

Do NOT register online, as those hours WILL NOT count toward your mandated community service hours. More information available [here](#).