



# Volunteer Handbook

American Red Cross of  
Lackawanna County

545 Jefferson Avenue  
Scranton, Pa 18510  
Phone - 570-207-0100  
Fax - 570-344-6534

Dear New Volunteer:

On behalf of everyone at the American Red Cross of Lackawanna County, welcome and thank you for joining our team. You are now a member of an international movement with organizations in more than 170 countries.

In Lackawanna County Red Cross volunteers donate their time and talent to help local citizens “prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.”

This handbook was created to give you important information that will enhance your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise.

Feel free to contact the Director of Community Affairs for additional information or to pass along suggestions or comments at (570)207-0112

Once again, welcome to the Lackawanna County Chapter. We wish you a rewarding experience as an American Red Cross volunteer.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Wright  
Director of Community Affairs

**About this handbook**

Welcome to the American Red Cross. Thank you for joining our cadre of over 5 million American Red Cross volunteers and volunteer blood donors.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to help others. We hope that you find volunteering with the American Red Cross a positive and rewarding experience.

The policies described in this handbook replace all prior policies, handbooks or policy guidance provided.

**American Red Cross Mission**

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, will provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

**Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement**

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. Brief descriptions of each are provided below:

**Humanity:** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (“the Movement”), born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality:** The Movement makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality:** In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence:** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service:** The Movement is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity:** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality:** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Our commitment to the Fundamental Principles brings us together with a common purpose and inspires us to excel and to behave in ways that inspire the trust of the American people. Each of us is responsible for upholding and living in accordance with these values every day.

### **Values**

Our American Red Cross values provide the foundation for the way we behave and the standard to which we hold ourselves. Each of us is responsible for upholding the values and living in accordance with them every day: Accountability, Collaboration, Commitment, Results, Trustworthiness, and Humanitarianism.

### **Ethics every day**

As volunteers at the American Red Cross, each of us is responsible, every day, for our own behavior and decisions we make. We affect the people and community around us. We make a difference.

We are committed to making a positive difference by...

- Improving the quality of human life.
- Enhancing self-reliance and concern for others.
- Helping people avoid, prepare for and cope with emergencies.

In living out this mission, each of us is responsible for living up to the fundamental standards of our culture:

- Telling the truth
- Keeping promises
- Respecting individuals
- Being fair

Each of us is responsible for maintaining the highest standards of ethics... every day.

### **Red Cross History**

Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross in 1881. In 1905, the United States Congress gave Red Cross a charter that mandates it to provide relief for domestic and international disaster victims and communication services for members of the Armed Forces. Every Red Cross chapter must do these two things, although many provide a much greater variety of community services.

Facts about the Red Cross –

- The International Red Cross was founded by Henry Dunant in 1863. Its Headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The American Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton in 1881 and is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- The United States Congress has mandated that all Red Cross chapters must provide services for the military and their families and provide relief assistance during all disasters, domestic and international.
- American Red Cross Headquarters is in Washington, DC.
- There are over 800 chapters and 35 blood services regions in the United States; we also have Armed Forces Emergency Services stations and HUBs serving members of the military and their families in the US and overseas.

- All Red Cross disaster assistance is an outright gift. It is funded by voluntary contributions from the American people.
- The International Red Cross has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize four times.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is an international organization with societies in 176 countries. It is unique among voluntary service organizations because it was founded on a set of seven Fundamental Principles.

The Red Cross of Lackawanna County was formed in 2008 after the merger of the Scranton and Carbondale/ Forest City Chapters.

## **About Us**

### **Lackawanna County Chapter Contact Information**

The Lackawanna County Chapter is located at  
545 Jefferson Avenue  
Scranton, Pa 18510  
Phone – 570-207-0100  
Fax – 570-344-6534

Office hours are Monday–Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30pm.

# **Volunteer Policies**

## **Commitment to volunteers, diversity and youth involvement**

The achievement of the goals of the Red Cross of Lackawanna County is best served by the active participation of members of the community. To this end, the Red Cross of Lackawanna County accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the organization and within all appropriate programs and activities.

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource. They shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals and procedures of the organization.

The Red Cross of Lackawanna County is committed to diversity and inclusiveness. Our employees; volunteers; governance; customers; blood, bone marrow and tissue donors; financial contributors; clients; suppliers and vendors should be representative of the diversity of the people residing in each local community the Red Cross serves. We are committed to people diversity, program diversity and service diversity.

Youth volunteers are welcomed! However, as volunteers who have not reached age 18, youth volunteers must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer work assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Youth are a vital link to the life of the American Red Cross and the future of this country. The American Red Cross is committed to developing youth involvement so that young people may better serve their community and become the leaders of tomorrow.

**Definition of an American Red Cross Volunteer**

A Red Cross volunteer is an individual who, beyond the responsibilities of paid employment, freely assists the American Red Cross in the accomplishment of its mission without expectation or receipt of compensation.

**What You Can Expect as a Red Cross Volunteer**

Your responsibility as a volunteer:

1. Be realistic and candid in accepting your assignment, taking into consideration your interests, skills and availability, as well as the needs of the Red Cross of Lackawanna County.
2. Learn your volunteer assignment as well as you can by completing all required training, asking questions and staying in touch with your supervisor.
3. Contribute to the Red Cross by being reliable and dependable in doing your job and working with your co-workers.
4. Follow all policies and guidelines of the Red Cross of Lackawanna County, sign a Code of Conduct, observe confidentiality when needed, and engage in appropriate public behavior at all times.
5. Participate in the feedback process by letting the chapter know how you feel about your volunteer experience and by giving constructive suggestions for improvement in any area.
6. Develop your skills as a volunteer by participating in training and development opportunities. Learn as much as you can to do the best job possible.

## **Recruitment and Selection Policies**

**Volunteer Records, References and Privacy**

The Red Cross of Lackawanna County maintains personnel records of each volunteer which are the property of the Red Cross of Lackawanna County and are confidential. Volunteers are required to notify Director of Community Affairs of any changes in contact information (*i.e.*, emergency contact notification, information, home address, telephone number(s), email address) and to report any additional educational and skill training acquired after joining the Red Cross of Lackawanna County.

**Recruitment and Equal Opportunity**

Volunteers are recruited by the Red Cross on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement to assist in mobilizing communities to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters and other life-threatening emergencies.

Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race or other condition. Volunteers are recruited based upon their skills, abilities and suitability to perform volunteer responsibilities.

Volunteers working in blood services may be required to complete additional specialized training as required by Food and Drug Administration regulations.

Volunteers serving on military bases or other government regulations may need to comply with additional rules and regulations.

### **Recruitment of minors (parent/guardian release form)**

Volunteers who have not reached the age 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with the appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

### **Service at the discretion of the organization**

The Red Cross of Lackawanna County accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the Red Cross of Lackawanna County. Volunteers agree that the organization may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the Red Cross of Lackawanna County or to make changes in the nature of their volunteer assignment.

## **Safety & Security Policies**

### **Workplace Safety and Security**

In order to provide a secure, safe and healthy work environment for volunteers, the Red Cross of Lackawanna County periodically provides information to volunteers about workplace safety, health, and security issues through regular internal communication means such as meetings, memos or other written communications.

Volunteers are discouraged from bringing large amounts of cash or other personal valuables to work unless absolutely necessary. The Red Cross of Lackawanna County is not responsible for volunteers' personal items that are lost or stolen.

Some of the best safety improvement ideas come from volunteers. Those with ideas, concerns or suggestions for improved safety and security in the workplace are encouraged to bring them to management's attention so that the safety and welfare of all volunteers can be improved. Volunteers should feel free to report, without fear of retaliation, any condition which they believe poses a safety, health or security risk in the workplace. The Red Cross of Lackawanna County will investigate such reports promptly and thoroughly and take appropriate corrective action. Further, any comments or jokes regarding threats of violence will be taken seriously, and dealt with appropriately and promptly.

Each volunteer is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Volunteers must immediately report any unsafe condition to their supervisor. Volunteers who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, volunteers should immediately notify their supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance benefit procedures.

**Harassment Free Workplace**

The Red Cross of Lackawanna County is committed to a work environment free from unlawful harassment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity while working, while on the Red Cross of Lackawanna County premises, while traveling on the Red Cross of Lackawanna County business, or at the Red Cross of Lackawanna County social functions. The Red Cross of Lackawanna County has zero tolerance for unlawful harassment.

Unlawful harassment is defined as harassment based on any characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law including race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, veteran or disability status, which is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the working conditions of a volunteer or employee. Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

1) Verbal or physical conduct that harasses a volunteer on the basis of a category protected by applicable federal, state or local law and that is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to create an intimidating, threatening, offensive or hostile environment.

2) Sexual displays or publications, or other verbal or physical conduct, where an volunteer is told either explicitly or implicitly that he or she must submit to the conduct to remain involved as a volunteer or where his or her reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for a management decision, such as evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, disciplinary action, or any other condition of volunteer involvement or career development. Examples of prohibited verbal or physical conduct include:

- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- Stalking, dating violence, date rape, or sexual assault;
- Persisting with romantic advances despite the rejection of the advances;
- Requests for sexual favors, whether or not accompanied by promises or threats with regard to the employment or volunteer relationship;
- Sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; comments about an individual's body, sexual prowess, sexual activity, or sexual attractiveness;
- Leering, whistling, or touching; insulting or obscene comments, sounds, or gestures; displays of sexually suggestive objects, cartoons or pictures.

3) Words, actions or visual matter that demean or show hostility toward an individual or group because of any characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

Volunteers are responsible for reporting any concerns regarding unlawful harassment to management pursuant to the Dispute Resolution Policy. Volunteers who act in good faith to report or assist in the investigation of a possible violation of this policy will not be retaliated against. If, after investigating any claim of unlawful harassment, the Red Cross of Lackawanna County concludes that a volunteer has filed a claim in bad faith, provided false information

regarding a claim, or refused to cooperate in an investigation of a claim, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken.

Violations of this policy will be dealt with appropriately and promptly. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, training, referral to counseling, and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Representing Red Cross**

Prior to any action or statement, which might significantly affect or obligate the Red Cross of Lackawanna County, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from the appropriate staff member. These actions may include but are not limited to, public statements to the press, collaboration or joint initiatives or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the organization as specifically indicated within their position/job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

## **Funding**

The American Red Cross is not a federal agency

- It is not, nor is it directed by, a government entity of agency.
- Public funds are not regularly appropriated to the American Red Cross to carry out its services and programs.

The legal status as a federal instrumentality–

- Means the American Red Cross is exempt from certain state taxes on many activities and from certain types of state and local regulations.
- Opens memberships to all the people of the United States, its territories, and its dependencies.

The American Red Cross is financially supported by voluntary contributions of individuals, organizations, foundations, fund raising, and cost–reimbursement charges for the products and services it offers to the public.

## Departments of the Red Cross

### **Disaster Services**

Disaster Services consists of planning, preparedness, community disaster education, mitigation, and relief to victims of disasters. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs.

### **Health and Safety Services**

Health and Safety Services consists of community education and training in first aid, CPR, aquatics and water safety, HIV/AIDS prevention, and mission- related care giving or the elderly and other priority groups.

### **Armed Forces Emergency Services**

Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) consists of emergency communication and supporting social services that enable those with family members serving in the United States Armed Forces to resolve family emergencies and provide members of the United States Armed Forces and their families access to emergency financial assistance.

### **Community Services**

Community Service consists of locally developed, delivered, and managed Chapter Services, consistent with the mission, corporate goals, and corporate objectives and regulations, that meet local community needs and can be sustained by the financial and volunteer support of the local community.

### **International Services**

International Services consists of tracing, dissemination of international humanitarian law, support of international disaster relief and development, and support of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An example of this would be tracing relatives separated during disasters of war.

### **Biomedical Services**

Biomedical Services consist of the extraction of blood for donation purposes. Each blood donation is tested for infectious disease, including hepatitis and HIV. Safety is also enhanced by the use of a national registry system which keeps track of all ineligible donors. Each donor is checked with this list.

# Conduct Policies

## Code of Conduct

All volunteers and employees of the American Red Cross, in delivering Red Cross services and in all other Red Cross activities, shall meet the following standards of conduct:

No volunteer or employee shall:

- a. Authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the American Red Cross, except in conformance with American Red Cross policy.
- b. Accept or seek on behalf of any person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value offered as a result of the volunteer's or employee's affiliation with the American Red Cross.
- c. Publicly use any American Red Cross affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official position of the American Red Cross.
- d. Disclose or use any confidential American Red Cross information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's or employee's affiliation with the American Red Cross to any person not authorized to receive such information or use to the disadvantage of the American Red Cross any such confidential information, without the express authorization of the American Red Cross.
- e. Knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the American Red Cross in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.
- f. Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the American Red Cross.
- g. Operate or act in a manner that creates a conflict with the interests of the American Red Cross and any organization in which the individual has a personal, business, or financial interest. The individual shall disclose such conflict of interest to the American Red Cross chair of the appropriate governing board, the appropriate Chief Executive Officer, or the General Counsel, as applicable, upon becoming aware of it. Where required, the individual shall absent himself or herself during deliberations, and shall refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.

# Acknowledgement and Receipt

Signature on this receipt acknowledges that you have reviewed the Red Cross of Lackawanna County volunteer handbook. Please sign and date the receipt.

Volunteer Handbook Statement of Certification

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have received and reviewed the Red Cross of Lackawanna County of the American Red Cross Volunteer Handbook.

I further understand that, by signing this statement as required I am indicating that I have read the Volunteer Handbook and understand its contents, or have discussed questions I have with the Director of Community Affairs. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

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Volunteer's Name (Please Print)

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Signature

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Address

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Date

\*Please return to:  
The Red Cross of Lackawanna County  
545 Jefferson Avenue  
Scranton, Pa 18510  
Phone - 570-207-0100  
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