



Volunteer Handbook

Revised June 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
Section 1: Welcome & About Us.....	3
Welcome Message.....	3
Our Mission.....	4
Our Vision.....	4
Over A Century of Service: Our History.....	4
The Beginning: 1924.....	4
Era of Growth: 1950s – 1990s.....	5
A New Millennium: Today’s Community Focus.....	5
Organizational Structure and Staff.....	6
Our Programs.....	6
Who to Connect With.....	7
Section 2: General Policies & Expectations.....	7
Our Core Values.....	7
Code of Conduct.....	8
General Expectations.....	8
Dress Code.....	9
The Population We Serve.....	9
Appropriate Language and Communication.....	9
Volunteer Feedback.....	10

Section 1: Welcome & About Us

Welcome Message

On behalf of the entire staff and Board of Directors, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to you for choosing to volunteer with Northside Neighborhood House (NNH). Your commitment is a direct, powerful way to help us fulfill our purpose.

As an NNH volunteer, you are an essential part of our vision. Whether you are assisting in our Thrift Stores, supporting our Community Schools, or helping with a special event, you embody our Core Values of Relationships and Collaboration. Simply put, our work would not be possible without you.

This handbook is designed to be your primary resource, covering everything from our history and core values to the policies and expectations that guide your work with us. We want your volunteer experience to be well-organized, connected to our mission, and deeply fulfilling.

Thank you for bringing your passion and dedication to NNH. We look forward to working alongside you to build a stronger, more stable community.

Sincerely,

Kalina Bagley

Chief Engagement Officer

Our Mission

To uplift & empower our neighbors north of the river.

Our Vision

We envision a thriving community working together to facilitate cross-generational stability, empowerment, and elimination of barriers for our neighbors.

Over A Century of Service: Our History

For over 100 years, Northside Neighborhood House (NNH) has adapted its programs to meet the changing needs of the North Hamilton County community. Our history shows a progression from direct relief to a focus on support and empowerment.

The Beginning: 1924

A group of women living in Northside noticed a lack of support for their neighbors in need and began offering sewing and quilting lessons for adults to help them learn a trade to provide for their families.

- **Initial Focus:** Providing essential education (Kindergarten and vocational skills like sewing and quilting) and organizing youth development through groups like the Boy Scouts.
- **Early Assistance:** During the 1930s Depression, we focused on direct relief, providing provisions, coal, and clothing, and established the NNH Library.
- **Health and Wellness:** Clinics were held to address community sickness, with polio and typhoid shots offered to the community in the following decades.

Era of Growth: 1950s – 1990s

This period formalized our identity, expanded youth programs, and secured a reliable financial foundation.

- **Identity:** The organization officially changed its name to Northside Neighborhood House in the 1950s and received a state license for its Kindergarten program in the 1960s.
- **Self-Sustaining Funding Mechanism:** The Thrift Shop became a core fundraising mechanism, providing consistent support for all our programs.
- **Shift in Service:** The GED program began, marking a greater focus on adult education. In the mid-1990s, the agency moved toward pro-active case management for more individualized support.

A New Millennium: Today's Community Focus

The 21st century has been defined by geographic expansion and a commitment to systemic change through the school system.

- **Northern Expansion (2010s):** We expanded services by opening thrift stores and community centers in the northern end of Hamilton County, including Red Bank and Soddy Daisy.
- **School-System Collaboration (2013):** NNH became the first organization in Hamilton County to implement the Community Schools model, launching our initial site at Red Bank High School and embedding our services directly into the school environment.
- **Recognition and Impact:** NNH was named Nonprofit of the Year by the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce.
- **Current Model:** We have rapidly expanded our Community School model from 5 to 10 sites in the 2020s.

Today, NNH continues the century-old mission of supporting neighbors by focusing heavily on educational equity and stability.

Organizational Structure and Staff

Northside Neighborhood House is governed by a **Board of Directors**, whose members bring a deep commitment to the north Hamilton County community. Our day-to-day operations are led by dedicated staff across our three major program areas (Thrift Stores, Stability Services, and Community Schools), all working together to advance our mission.

Our Programs

NNH operates through the following volunteer-supported areas:

- **Thrift Stores** – Each thrift store has a Thrift Store Manager who serves as the primary point of contact for volunteers. Each store has two Assistant Managers. Whether you have a scheduling question or need guidance on the floor, the Manager or Assistant Manager(s) is your go-to resource.
- **Stability Services** – Our Stability team works directly with neighbors to reduce barriers and build long-term self-sufficiency. Volunteers supporting this program are connected with the Lead Case Manager and Chief Stability Officer.
- **Community Schools** – Each school we serve has a designated NNH Community School Coordinator who works alongside school staff and supports volunteers at their site. In addition, an Afterschool Program Manager, and Afterschool Program Assistant are on-site to conduct that portion of our programming. .
- **Fundraising Events** - Volunteers supporting fundraising events are connected with the Chief Development Officer and Chief Engagement Officer.

- **Administrative** – or administrative functions are commonly connected to Stability Services or Fundraising. Volunteers are connected with the relevant Staff Lead for each engagement, usually including the Chief Engagement Officer, Chief Development Officer and/or Chief Stability Officer.

Who to Connect With

Your Direct Site Supervisor or Staff Lead is your first point of contact for day-to-day questions, site-specific guidance, and anything that comes up during your shift. While our policies and core expectations are consistent across all NNH locations, we recognize that each site has its own rhythm, and your supervisor is best positioned to navigate those nuances with you.

If you have a concern that feels unresolved after speaking with your supervisor, you're welcome to reach out to the Chief Engagement Officer.

Section 2: General Policies & Expectations

Our Core Values

Our five Core Values serve as the foundation for every decision, action, and interaction within our organization. As a volunteer, your conduct is expected to embody these values:

- **Relationships:** We cultivate authentic relationships by fostering trust, empathy, and intentionality with everyone we encounter.
- **Accountability:** We take ownership of our actions, decisions, and results, holding ourselves to the highest standards of excellence and integrity.
- **Respect:** We honor the experiences, values, and perspectives of every individual we serve and work alongside.

- **Collaboration:** We achieve greater impact by aligning our team and supporting community initiatives that empower our neighbors.
 - **Passion:** We are passionate and dedicated to making a difference. This passion fuels our commitment to relationships, accountability, respect, and collaboration, enabling us to create a lasting impact.
-

Code of Conduct

It is the intent of NNH to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization, and the underlying purpose of this Policy is to support the organization's goal of legal and ethical compliance. NNH requires all staff, Board members, and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As representatives of NNH, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our roles, and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

General Expectations

This Code of Conduct is not intended to supersede any other applicable federal, state or local governmental law or regulation. The general expectations of NNH volunteers include but are not limited to the following:

- Devote full effort to tasks during volunteer hours.
- Demonstrate professional boundaries and respect for NNH, co-workers, clients, customers, fellow volunteers, donors, and vendors.
- Maintain confidentiality of information pertaining to NNH, staff, clients, volunteers, donors, and vendors.
- Resolve volunteer-related issues and disputes in a professional manner and through established Agency processes.
- Ensure concerns are first reported to the Direct Site Supervisor or Staff Lead. Unresolved matters or issues involving a supervisor may be escalated to the Chief Engagement Officer.

- Support efforts that ensure a safe and healthy work environment.
 - Report any concerns of policy violations, harassment, discrimination, or unsafe workplace behaviors.
 - Support “Zero Tolerance for Retaliation.”
-

Dress Code

As representatives of Northside Neighborhood House, volunteers are expected to exhibit a neat, well-groomed appearance. Clothing should be appropriate to the job duties and safety should be the foremost consideration in one's attire. Thrift volunteers are required to wear closed toe shoes.

The Population We Serve

NNH is dedicated to supporting those **north of the river** in Hamilton County.

When volunteering, you will be interacting with individuals and families from all walks of life – students in our Community Schools, shoppers and donors at our Thrift Stores, and neighbors receiving stability services. Every person you encounter is an essential part of the community we envision working together to achieve **cross-generational stability** and **empowerment**.

Appropriate Language and Communication

In all interactions, volunteers must demonstrate professional boundaries and respect for NNH, staff, fellow volunteers, donors, and the clients and neighbors we serve.

- **Person-First Language:** Always use language that emphasizes the individual, not their circumstances. For example, use "neighbors

experiencing hardship," "a client receiving assistance," or "a person shopping at our thrift store."

- **Non-Judgmental Tone:** Maintain a compassionate and respectful tone. Avoid language that implies blame, judgment, or personal failure when discussing the challenges faced by our neighbors. Our goal is to provide a "hand up", not to evaluate need.
- **Confidentiality:** As detailed in the **Code of Conduct**, you must maintain strict confidentiality of information pertaining to NNH, staff, clients, and customers. Do not discuss the personal information or circumstances of clients/neighbors with anyone outside of NNH staff, even if using respectful language.

Volunteer Feedback

NNH values your perspective on your volunteer experience. We gather feedback in a few ways: an annual satisfaction survey sent to all active volunteers, and shorter surveys tied to specific events, trainings, or initiatives throughout the year.

We take this feedback seriously. Changes to how we train, equip, and communicate have all come out of what volunteers have shared with us. While we may not be able to act on every suggestion, our decisions are always guided by our mission, strategic priorities, and the needs of the neighbors we serve. Your input helps shape how we grow, even when it doesn't result in an immediate change.

If you have feedback between surveys, your Direct Site Supervisor or Staff Lead is always the right first stop. As stated above, if you ever have an unresolved concern, you're welcome to reach out to the Chief Engagement Officer at kbagley@nnhouse.org.