



**SNOW BUDDY PROGRAM  
2014-2015  
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



**Volunteers  
of America®**

**COLORADO BRANCH**

**Volunteers of America  
Snow Buddy Program  
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# Welcome

*“I am only one, but still I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
but still I can do something.  
I will not refuse to do the something I can do”  
-Helen Keller*

Dear Volunteer,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to Volunteers of America. Volunteers have been a vital part of our programs and services for over 115 years. It has been an important partnership and I am especially grateful that you have chosen to join with us to reach out to those who need our help and compassion.

Serving others is a special calling indeed. I hope that your volunteer experience with us will be fulfilling and that you will be enriched by the time you spend helping to improve the quality of life for those who need us most.

Thank you for your kindness and your dedication.

Sincerely,

Dianna L Kunz  
President & CEO  
Volunteers of America Colorado Branch

# Volunteers of America Overview

## **Mission Statement**

The Volunteers of America Colorado Branch seeks to identify and serve the basic needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in the community.

## **History**

Volunteer of America was founded in New York in 1896 by Ballington and Maud Booth. It began with the purpose of reaching and uplifting all people and bringing them to the active service of God.

At the turn of the century, Volunteers of America in Denver administered four programs: the City Mission, the Young Women's Home, The Workingmen's Hotel, and the Relief Department. All offered shelter and safety to hundreds of Denver residents. Over one hundred years later, we celebrate reaching out to those in need of help. Over 35 programs throughout Colorado provide direction and support for those most vulnerable. There are approximately 250 full and part time staff members and approximately 15,788 annual volunteers. With financial support from sources like Mile High United Way, federal, state and city governments, foundation and corporate grants, fees for services, donations, and fundraisers, Volunteers of America is able to serve over 200,000 people each year statewide.

Today, Volunteers of America is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of business and community leaders. The Board sets policy, is responsible for fiscal matters, and provides direction for the President.

# Snow Buddy Program Description

Volunteers of America is excited for the 7th season of the Snow Buddies Program. It was initiated in the 2008-2009 winter season, due to the outstanding need of senior homeowners during the long winter months.

The program is now reaching out to all the senior homeowners in Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties. The volunteer Snow Buddy will be connected with a senior in their neighborhood (within 2 miles of their home) for the entire winter season.

The goals of this program are to prevent falls and create a safe environment for seniors in the community, as well as comply with county regulations on snow removal to avoid costly fines.

We thank you for your help and concern for those who are not able to do this chore throughout the long winter here in Colorado!

**“We will go wherever we are needed and do whatever comes to hand.”**

-Ballington Booth circa 1896  
(Co-founder of Volunteers of America)



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# Code of Ethics

- I will be conscious of the fact that everything I do, directly or indirectly, has the potential to reflect upon Volunteers of America as a whole.
- I will conduct myself at all times with openness, forthrightness, and honesty in dealing with people and organizations, both internally and externally.
- I will hold myself to the highest possible standard of conduct reflective of the work I do, striving always to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.
- I will treat everyone with dignity, worth, respect, concern, courtesy and fairness.
- I will be sensitive to seek solutions for all instances of discrimination and social injustice that I observe.
- I will respect and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- I will exercise prudent stewardship of all Volunteers of America resources.
- I will avoid all conflict of interest relationships with board members, staff, suppliers, those we serve, and other organizations with whom I deal, unless disclosed and approved.
- I will accept no gifts or favors that might influence the performance of my responsibilities.
- I will also adhere to and comply with the defined standards of conduct.

# Volunteers of America Agrees To:

- Provide adequate training.
- Provide on-going opportunities and communicate those to interested volunteers.
- Provide free parking at the Bob Magness Administrative Building.
- Provide feedback on volunteer performance.
- Recognize the value of volunteers and respect their skills and individual needs.
- Be receptive to feedback from volunteers regarding ways to improve volunteering.
- Provide a letter of reference upon request.
- Maintain accurate records of volunteer hours.
- (Note: Any volunteer who has not volunteered in a 90 day period will be considered inactive. Any volunteer who has been inactive for a two year period will be terminated.)

## **Dismissals**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies of Volunteers of America or falsify documents are subject to immediate dismissal.

## **Resignations**

Volunteers are asked to give a written resignation at least 2 weeks before resigning. Volunteers of America would appreciate your feedback regarding your volunteer experience.

# Volunteer Expectations

- Complete all necessary paperwork and consent to/and successfully pass a background
- To commit to providing volunteer shoveling services for the entire winter 2014-2015 season.
- Provide own snow removal equipment and dress appropriately to present a good image to the clients and community.
- To shovel/clear snow over 2" within 24 hours of snowfall to avoid city and county fines.
- To shovel/clear the walkway and sidewalks at a minimum so your Snow Buddy is not at risk of falling.
- To contact your Snow Buddy prior to the first snowfall to arrange a pre-snowfall face-to-face meeting (see checklist on page 11 for more details).
- To record and submit volunteer hours to the Snow Buddies Program the first Wednesday of each month (November-April).
- To call the Snow Buddies Program and your client if you will be out of town for an extended period of time during the winter months.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times regarding clients.
- If a client needs help with other things around the home, please refer them to the Handyman Program (303-297-0408).
- Report any incident that is not consistent with normal practices to the Snow Buddy Program staff immediately.
- Report any change of address or other information to the Snow Buddy Program staff.
- Report any injury while volunteering to the Project Manager of the Handyman Program (303-297-0408) and complete an accident report within 24 hours.

***HAVE FUN AND STAY WARM!***



# Boundaries

The program would like to foster the idea of “neighbors helping neighbors.” However, it is essential that the relationship between the volunteer and client only goes as far as both individuals feel comfortable.

While the relationship between each matched volunteer and client will vary depending on the individuals involved, it is necessary for all volunteers to uphold appropriate boundaries. Volunteers who fail to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries are subject to termination.

- You may be the only person to see this client all day. A few cheerful words may brighten their day.
- If you feel uncomfortable with a client request, trust your judgment and do **not** complete this request. Contact the Snow Buddy Program Coordinator immediately if you need help making this decision or if you would like assistance communicating the decision to the client.
- Make sure to get permission before entering the client’s home.
- Only visit the client’s home when not shoveling if given permission to do so by the client.
- Maintain client confidentiality before, during and after the winter season, including the client’s address and personally identifying information.
- Never allow a client to ride in your car.
- Contact VOA if you have any concerns about the client’s well-being or safety.

Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures of Volunteers America can result in the cancellation of a Snow Buddies match and possible termination.

# Program Details

**Commitment:** Volunteers are asked to commit to volunteering for the entire winter season.

**Age:** We welcome volunteers of all ages. The *Youth/Family Volunteer Program* is available for those who are under 18. Volunteers who are over the age of 55 also have the option of joining our *RSVP Program*, where you may be eligible for special benefits, such as supplemental insurance.

**Gifts:** Volunteers are not allowed to accept cash or gifts from clients.

**Insurance:** Volunteers are responsible for carrying their own insurance of any kind, such as Health Insurance, Auto Insurance etc.

**Office Hours:** The Bob Magness Administration Building is open Monday-Friday from 8 am-5 pm.

**Smoking:** Volunteers of America facilities are smoke free. Smoking is only permitted outside the facilities.

**Tax Deductions:** Income tax deductions or mileage may be available for some volunteers. Call the IRS or your accountant for specific information.

**Valuables:** Volunteers are encouraged to keep valuables at home. Volunteers of America assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

**Solicitation:** Volunteers are not to engage in solicitation of any kind while volunteering for the VOA.

# Snow Buddy Pre-Snowfall Meeting Checklist

- Discuss necessary locations of shoveling (minimum sidewalk leading to doorways and front sidewalk). Agree upon these locations.
- Discuss appropriate times for shoveling for both parties within the 24 hour period of time after a snowfall of 2 inches or more.
- Discuss the plan for the volunteer to complete the shoveling – Will the volunteer automatically come out with the 24 hour timeframe or should the volunteer call to check in with the client first?
- At your discretion, exchange contact information (VOA will never provide your phone number or address).

## Winter Tips for Volunteers

- Always wear appropriate clothing, during the cold and snowy winter season and during extremely cold days be especially careful not to spend extended periods of time outside.
- If you need to drive, remember that roads can be icy and slippery, so be sure to drive with caution.
- Shoveling is hard work! Be sure to stay hydrated and to drink plenty of fluids while helping your snow buddy.

# Optional Bus Stop Shoveling

Did you know there are 10,000 bus stops in the metro area? While RTD works hard to keep up with snow removal from these locations during the winter, some help is needed to ensure proper accessibility for those who rely on public transportation, including seniors and those with disabilities. Snowfall can make access to stops difficult for seniors, those with disabilities and/or those using walkers or wheelchairs. New this year, the Snow Buddy Program is teaming up with the Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council to raise awareness around the need for help shoveling local bus stops. If there is a bus stop within a block or two of either your senior buddy's home or your own home, please consider shoveling the bus stop(s) to increase accessibility for those who rely on public transportation.

**We appreciate your consideration in this matter, although this is not required of you as a Snow Buddy Volunteer.**

If you are able to clear a nearby bus stop, consider the following:

- Please clear the sidewalk leading to the bus stop.
- Please clear a path wide enough for a wheelchair to travel (at least 36" wide) from the sidewalk to the bus stop sign.
- Please clear a space (at least 48" square) on one side of the bus stop sign a few feet back from the curb for an individual in a wheelchair to wait for the bus.
- Please clear the curb area directly in front of the wheelchair waiting area so that the wheelchair lift or ramp can be deployed without hitting any obstructions.
- If the stop is close to the curb cut, please be sure the curb cut is also cleared so an individual in a wheelchair can safely travel from the street to the sidewalk.

Bus stop locations can be easily accessed by visiting [www.rtd-denver.com](http://www.rtd-denver.com) and clicking on the Services tab, then opening the Systems Map. The Snow Buddy Program Coordinator will also let you know if there is a bus stop in close proximity to the senior client you are matched with.