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## Twin Cities Region



# Volunteer Handbook

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## **4. What if a Volunteer Encounters Problems at the Service Site?**

Most IVC partner Service Sites agree to a trial period to ensure compatibility between the volunteer and the agency. If problem arises, IVC recommends that the Volunteer first speak with his or her site supervisor. Then, if the situation remains unsatisfactory, the Volunteer or Service Site will contact the IVC Regional Director. The Regional Director will generally be able to work out a mutually-satisfying alternative arrangement.

## **5. How are the Specific Hours of Service Arranged?**

The particular days and hours that an Ignatian Volunteer will serve are negotiated between the Volunteer and the service site supervisor, depending on the Volunteer's availability and the site's needs. The Ignatian Volunteer also works out all vacation, sick, or personal time off with the service site supervisor and how any missed service time will be made up in future weeks. For any extended absences, the Ignatian Volunteer is asked to keep the IVC Regional Director informed.

## **6. What Differences Can an Ignatian Volunteer Expect to Find Between Non-Profit and Corporate/For-Profit Worlds?**

- The bottom line drives the for-profit world; results are more difficult to measure in the non-profit world.
- Resources are frequently over-extended in the non-profit world — hence, non-profits will necessarily become creative and resourceful in accomplishing their mission.
- Non-profits may exhibit a better morale, and a heightened feeling of accomplishment.
- Non-profits may experience a great degree of satisfaction among their clients, but may also engender a sense of frustration because some problems seem intractable e.g. homelessness, addiction, mental illness.
- Non-profits focus on working directly with people in the time of their greatest need, rather than with those seeking economic gain.

The Regional Council:

- helps IVC make connections with local donors and local foundations.
- raise the visibility of IVC locally through a variety of means.
- brings more people into the fund raising circle in order to strengthen the local program and to help spread IVC to other regions.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. How do Service Sites relate to IVC ?**

Each service site pays an annual Partnership Fee for each Ignatian Volunteer in order to support and sustain the presence of IVC in their region. The annual Partnership Fee of \$2,000 helps IVC to cover its expenses related to the operation of the program, administrative and spirituality-related costs, as well as to support the common activities of the IVC organization.

### **2. How Are IVC Volunteer Members Assigned to a Service Site?**

Both the Ignatian Volunteer and the service site submit applications. IVC seeks to match the talents and experience of Ignatian Volunteers with the needs of IVC partner service sites.

A new Ignatian Volunteer is usually given two or three sites to visit, interview at and tour. The Volunteer discerns the best match while the partner service site does its own considering about the aptness of the particular Ignatian Volunteer. If these sites are not suitable, the Regional Director pursues and offers other partner service sites.

### **3. Can an Ignatian Volunteer Be Terminated From the Program?**

Under certain circumstances, an IVC volunteer member can be terminated from the program. Reasons for termination include but are not limited to:

- The volunteer member has consistently failed to adhere to the service site's policies and procedures.
- The volunteer member has consistently failed to meet the commitment of IVC.

Dear Ignatian Volunteer:

Welcome to IVC! After years of working in whatever worlds you labored, retirement brings with it an opportunity for you to continue to contribute to the world in remarkable ways. We in IVC have discovered that if you are retired, your most important work may still be ahead of you. We are eager to assist you in this new chapter of your journey through life.

As an Ignatian Volunteer, you will be reflecting personally and with others in order to deepen your understanding of, and experience with, people who are materially poor and marginalized. Your commitment both to serve and to reflect on that service will help you search and find God in every circumstance of your life.

This handbook is designed to assist you as you begin or continue your IVC service. It will explain the reflection process of the program as well as answer some of the most frequently asked questions. Please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Director or the staff at the National Office if you have any questions or concerns. All of us work to give you the best experience that we can in IVC.

Gratefully,

Mary McGinnity  
Executive Director

## **WHAT IS THE IGNATIAN VOLUNTEER CORPS (IVC)?**

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC), a faith-based, non-profit organization, was founded in 1995 by two Jesuit priests: Jim Conroy, S.J. and Charlie Costello, S.J. They dreamed of matching the dynamic abilities of men and women fifty years and more with the great needs of poor, vulnerable and marginalized people by service with IVC's partner nonprofit organizations. IVC is a Catholic organization, rooted in Ignatian Spirituality. People of other faith traditions are welcome to apply to IVC and share in this unique program of faith and service.

### ***IVC Mission***

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps is an organization *of* volunteers and *for* volunteers. It provides mature men and women the opportunity to serve the needs of people who are poor, to work for a more just society, and to grow deeper in Christian faith by reflecting and praying in the Ignatian tradition.

### ***IVC Values***

- service done *with* and *for* the materially poor.
- reflection on that service experience.
- life experience, wisdom and skills of people aged 50 and greater.
- lay leadership transforming the world through justice and faith rooted in Gospel values.
- the dignity and equality of all women and men regardless of race, age, education, economic deprivation, or social status.
- the search for the presence of God in all things and the call to holiness extended to all women and men throughout life.
- Jesuit support including opportunities for spiritual development in the Ignatian tradition.

- protects the viability and integrity of existing IVC regions as it also helps assist new IVC regions.
- leads activities for the common works of IVC, such as marketing, website, newsletter, etc..
- produces the annual "Study Guide" on the year's theme for monthly meetings and retreats.
- ensures fiscal responsibility via budgets and both national and local fund raising work.
- assures IVC's relationship with Jesuit provinces and Jesuit institutions.

**The IVC Board of Directors** is a group with national representation that has fiduciary, policy and executive management responsibilities. It supports and helps to grow IVC across the country. The board meets several times a year and conducts its work through an active committee structure.

The IVC Board of Directors:

- determines IVC's mission and long-range goals.
- selects the executive director and assesses his or her performance.
- ensures effective, ongoing strategic planning and monitoring of strategic objectives and sufficient fund development and allocation of resources for the financial health of IVC.
- boosts IVC's public profile through key alliances;
- protects the legal and ethical integrity of IVC and assures accountability through a financial audit.
- recruits and orients new board members and assesses its own board performance.
- lives out the Ignatian values of IVC.

**The IVC Regional Council** consists of local individuals who are committed to the growth of IVC within the region. The Council plays a key role in the local IVC as its members assist the Regional Director and the IVC Development Director to deepen the roots of IVC.

- works with spiritual reflectors and others who support the program locally.
- oversees the operations of the local Regional Council to increase IVC's visibility and support in the area.
- participates in the common activities of IVC around communication and fund raising, supported by the national IVC office and a local Regional Council.

**IVC Spiritual Reflectors** are men and women – lay persons, vowed religious, and priests – who have a background and experience in Ignatian Spirituality and in being companions on spiritual journeys with others.

Spiritual Reflectors commit to:

- meet individually with one or more Ignatian Volunteers monthly.
- share a spiritual conversation on service work and other related topics.
- assist Ignatian Volunteer to explore and discover the presence and Word of God in the midst of life's joys and sorrows, frustrations and triumphs.
- maintain confidentiality concerning all discussions.
- periodically attend monthly meetings and retreats.

**The IVC National Office** ensures the integrity of the IVC vision, mission, and program throughout the country. The National Office supports IVC regional programs and leads the common efforts of the organization (e.g. communications, budget, bookkeeping, fund raising and technological tools),

The National Office:

- provides formation and resources to deepen the Ignatian spirituality of IVC staff, volunteers, regional councils and board members.
- provides "The Manual" with best practices and ongoing support for IVC standards to Regional Directors on recruitment, PR, fund raising, the reflection process, management tasks.

## **WHAT IS THE IGNATIAN TRADITION?**

Ignatian spirituality is best summed up in one phrase – **Finding God in All Things**. It invites us to search for and find God in every circumstance of life, not just in explicitly religious situations or activities.

### ***Characteristics of Ignatian Spirituality***

- sees life and the whole universe as a gift, calling forth wonder and gratefulness.
- gives ample scope to imagination and emotion as well as intellect.
- seeks to find the divine in all things – in all peoples and cultures, in all areas of study and learning, in every human experience, and especially in the person of Jesus.
- cultivates critical awareness of personal and social evil, but points to God's love as more powerful than any evil.
- stresses freedom, need for discernment, and responsible action.
- empowers people to become leaders in service, "men and women for others," building a more just and humane world.

## **HOW IS IVC A DIFFERENT VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?**

An Ignatian Volunteer is asked to:

- work with the materially poor one (1) or two (2) days a week (or equivalent hours) at a service site.
- attend and participate in monthly meetings and scheduled retreats or days of reflection.
- meet monthly with a spiritual reflector.
- reflect and keep a journal of service experiences.

At the heart of the IVC program is a reflection process that is both spiritual and analytical. It guides Ignatian Volunteers in the ongoing search for the presence of the living God. Time devoted to individual and group reflection is a central element of IVC.

Based on Ignatian spirituality, the reflection process has the following four components:

1. *Personal Reflection:* Prayer, readings, and journaling are ways that Ignatian Volunteers record and reflect upon their activities, observations, feelings, ideas, questions, and insights.
2. *One-on-One Sessions with a Spiritual Reflector:* Each month Ignatian Volunteers meet individually with a “spiritual reflector,” someone trained in Ignatian Spirituality with whom one can discuss one’s service experience in the light of Christian faith.
3. *Monthly Gatherings:* Ignatian Volunteers gather with other Ignatian Volunteers in their area at a monthly meeting. They share volunteer experiences and pray and reflect together in community.
4. *Retreats and Days of Reflection:* Volunteers participate in three retreats or days of reflection throughout the year for community reflection, prayer, and support.

#### **WHY DO IGNATIAN VOLUNTEERS WORK WITH MATERIALLY POOR PEOPLE?**

Work with and among men, women and children who are poor is an essential dynamic of IVC. As part of the service experience, volunteers meet persons who are poor in order to form relationships with them. Volunteers learn the day to day effects of poverty and deprivation in the lives and faces of those who are its victims. For many Ignatian Volunteers, these experiences are eye-opening and prompt analysis and questions about social systems. Lives are transformed. Mistrust and fear on both sides give way to companionship.

The desire that prompted the Ignatian Volunteer to join IVC, hopefully, comes to fruitfulness. Reflection on one’s service to and with people who are materially poor is an opportunity for horizons to expand and for minds and hearts to be opened.

- complying with the service site’s rules, regulations and procedures – particularly with regard to training and possible certification re: “Safe Environment”.
- notifying and negotiating with a site supervisor about vacation time and other extended absences.

#### **WHAT IS THE SERVICE SITE’S COMMITMENT?**

The service site commits to:

- provide the opportunity for Ignatian Volunteers to contribute their talents.
- provide a job description and orientation.
- designate a staff person to provide an orientation to the site, support for the volunteer’s ongoing needs, and supervise work done.
- exercise sufficient precautions for the physical safety of the Ignatian Volunteer.
- partner with IVC through an annual Partnership Fee which help IVC support and maintain its program in the region, throughout the country and in new regions.
- provide liability insurance to cover all volunteer work-related injuries or accidents.

#### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF IVC STAFF?**

The **IVC Regional Director** coordinates and supports the program in a specific geographic region and provides the following services:

- markets IVC and recruits new Ignatian Volunteers.
- develops relationships with local service sites.
- processes volunteer applications and assists the Volunteer in finding a suitable placement.
- maintains contact with and supports Ignatian Volunteers throughout the year.
- organizes monthly meetings, local retreats and days of reflection.

Time is also spent working through the material from the year's "Study Guide," generally a book and excerpts from other documents intended to broaden one's perspective and provide further insights to service, reflection and prayer.

### **WHERE DO IGNATIAN VOLUNTEERS SERVE?**

IVC places its Volunteers in Partner Service Sites that:

- directly serve people who are materially poor or that work to address the issues and structures that impact those who are poor;
- provide volunteers the opportunity to "serve faith and promote justice," especially out of a "preferential option for the poor;"
- recognize and respect the dignity of the people they serve;
- value and utilize a volunteer's skills and life experience;
- provide the opportunity to contribute two days (or equivalent hours) per week; and
- allow for flexibility in scheduling.

### **WHAT ARE THE SERVICE EXPECTATIONS OF AN IGNATIAN VOLUNTEER?**

An Ignatian Volunteer is expected to commit one or two days a week (or equivalent hours) working at a service site, plus time for transportation and the reflection process essential to the IVC experience.

Ignatian Volunteers serve for ten months of the year. A volunteer may arrange for a somewhat different schedule if the Regional Director and the Service Site both agree to the adaptation.

### **WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER'S COMMITMENT TO A SERVICE SITE?**

An IVC volunteer commits to:

- providing service for the equivalent of one (1) or two (2) days a week on a schedule mutually agreed upon.

*"Ignatius and his followers began their preaching in poverty. They worked with the powerful and the powerless. Today, whatever our ministry, we Jesuits enter into solidarity with the poor, the marginalized, and the voiceless, in order to enable their participation in the processes that shape the society in which we all live and work. They in turn teach us about our own poverty."*

*Our Way of Proceeding,  
Documents of the Thirty-Fourth  
General Congregation of the  
Society of Jesus, 1995*

### **WHY DO IGNATIAN VOLUNTEERS REFLECT ON THEIR SERVICE?**

*Excitement, confusion, pride, frustration, anger, joy ...*

These are just a few of the emotions that Ignatian Volunteers encounter during their year of service. Volunteers find themselves working in unfamiliar environments with a diverse group of people. The situations they encounter present opportunities for growth and learning that are rich but often fleeting. That is why IVC urges Volunteers to record new and provocative observations, work through complex emotions, and do the mental work that leads from experience to knowledge, from growth to commitment.

### **WHY DO IGNATIAN VOLUNTEERS JOURNAL?**

*(Adapted from Journal Reflection: A Resource Guide American Alliance for Rights and Responsibilities)*

#### **Heighten Observational Skills**

Over time, the act of journal-keeping can help volunteers become more attentive, thoughtful and engaged as they go about their daily work.

## **Explore Feelings**

Their service exposes volunteers directly to the needs of others. It often involves direct confrontation with pain, sadness, and injustice. It can provoke feelings of excitement, pride and happiness, as well as mounting frustration and anger. A journal offers a place to release some of these feelings privately. But that release is only the first step. It is the very intensity of the emotions provoked by service among those who are poor that creates opportunities for learning and growth.

The journal offers a chance to explore the reasons behind the feelings – to analyze the appropriateness and effectiveness of your responses to these feelings – to imagine and test possible ways of responding in the future. The journal can provide a vehicle for converting emotional intensity into personal and spiritual growth, broader understandings, insight, and commitment.

## **Assess Progress**

When volunteers take the time to examine their service experience closely, they will gain a deeper and more thorough understanding of events than when they simply perform the tasks without reflection.

Reflection offers an opportunity to step back and review both individual and group accomplishments and progress. Recognizing your own growth and increase in knowledge provides encouragement to continue on the journey. Recognizing mistakes makes it easier to learn from them.

## **Journal Keeping as Prayer**

Keeping a journal about your experience in order to unveil its meaning can become prayer. First, offer the time to God as you consciously put yourself in the presence of God. Second, ask for the light of God's Spirit as you review your service work and remember the persons who are part of it. Third, think of a Bible event that is connected somehow with your service experience. Fourth, ask yourself some good questions: How would Jesus have responded? Did I sense Jesus in the person or event? How am I growing in finding God in all things?

## **Increase Communication**

You will never be asked to share your journal entries, but you may do so if you choose to share them. Still, sharing journal entries can be helpful in uniting and bringing about greater understanding among a group of Ignatian Volunteers.

## **WHY DO IGNATIAN VOLUNTEERS MEET ONE-ON-ONE WITH A SPIRITUAL REFLECTOR?**

People are often helped to integrate their faith and their life by talking on a regular basis with someone they can trust. This person, the spiritual reflector, will act as a guide for the journey, helping Ignatian Volunteers to discover the presence and call of God in the people and circumstances of everyday life.

The assumption is that God is already present there, that the spiritual reflector can help one to notice God's presence and that the Volunteer will find words for talking about that presence. The spiritual reflector will also encourage the expansion of the Volunteer's understanding and accompany the Volunteer as he or she moves out of his/her own comfort zone into the zone of the Spirit of God. In time, a spiritual reflector may suggest various kinds of spiritual exercises and may encourage the Volunteer to reflect on the whole of one's life as the place to meet God.

Having someone that the Volunteer trusts and feels comfortable with is essential to the spiritual reflection process. Regional Directors stand ready to adjust the match between an Ignatian Volunteer and a spiritual reflector if either party feels the match is not satisfactory.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT A MONTHLY MEETING?**

Volunteers meet monthly, generally for two to four hours. Sometimes there will be refreshments, lunch or the celebration of Mass – depending on the region's usual practices. Ignatian Volunteers share reflections from their recent service experience. Sharing may be in story form and may connect with insights from Scripture, literature, personal experience, or the newspaper. Following each individual sharing, group members engage in a brief period of dialogue. The added insights of others may help expand the meanings of volunteer experiences.