New Volunteer Orientation
With the words, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,” President Lincoln affirmed the government’s obligation to care for those injured during the war and to provide for the families of those who perished on the battlefield. Thank you for considering serving those who served.

While our primary mission is to deliver the best care anywhere, our customers are America’s Heroes, which makes volunteering here a little different from most hospitals. If you enjoy working in a health care environment and showing appreciation for those who bought your freedom through sacrifice, we know you will enjoy serving where the price of freedom is visible every day.

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Expectations

• Our program requires a 100 hours minimum commitment. If you cannot make this commitment, please STOP now and call or email us to talk about short-term needs.

• Talk to us if:
  • Your personal/work schedule changes and you need to change your assignment schedule.
  • You aren’t enjoying your assignment. – We are happy to try to find something different. (about 1 in 7 volunteers change assignments, so you won’t be alone)

• **Follow the rules!** Note that most of what you’ll find here are health care rules, not government rules and are designed for patient safety.
VA Structure

Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Benefits Administration

Veterans Health Administration

National Cemetary Administration

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
VISN 8 Access Points

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS)

Executive Leadership

• Thomas Wisnieski, Director, NF/SGVHS
• Wende Dottor, Deputy Director, NF/SGVHS
• Bradley Bender, M.D., Chief of Staff, NF/SGVHS
• Maureen Wilkes, Associate Director, Lake City VA Medical Center
• Margaret Givens, Associate Director, Patient Care Services, NF/SGVHS
• Chad Adams, Assistant Director, Outpatient Clinics and Planning, NF/SGVHS

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
NF/SGVHS Access Points

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
NF/SGVHS (Gainesville Office)

• Nicky Adams – Chief, Voluntary Service
• Mark Lowe – Program Support Assistant
• Office Phone: (352) 374-1611 ext 6068
• Staff Email: VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov
NF/SGVHS (Lake City Office)

- Michael Carey – Assistant Chief, Voluntary Service
- Cindy Voltz – Voluntary Service Assistant
- Vacant - Secretary
- Office Phone: (386) 755-3016 ext 2135
- Staff Email: VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
What does VA Voluntary Service Do?

- Recruiting, orienting and placing volunteers within VA.
- Handles Volunteer human resource issues.
- Ensures Volunteer hours are logged into a timekeeping system.
- Coordinates group visits to inpatients.
- Hosts award ceremonies.
- Accepts and records donations that directly benefit Veteran patients and their families.

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Types of Volunteers

Volunteers accepted in the VAVS Program are considered Without Compensation (WOC) employees. WOC precludes monetary payment, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy.

- Regularly Scheduled Volunteers
- Occasional Volunteers
- Student (Youth) Volunteers - Age 13-18
Benefits of VA Volunteering

- Meal provided when volunteering four or more hours a day when and where available
- Tax free shopping at Canteen Service
- Personal satisfaction from serving those who served
- Free on-site training opportunities
- Free flu shots, screenings and other benefits as announced
- Recognition and award opportunities
- Free use of the medical library
- Credit Union Membership
- Gainesville Regional Transit System pass
- Social interaction with Veterans and other Volunteers
Volunteer Assignments

• Many Volunteer assignments are available based on interests and the needs of the medical center.

• Factors like age, background check results, and driving record may be disqualifiers for some assignments.

• We work hard to find assignments that fit your interests and our needs – happy volunteers keep volunteering!
VHA Blueprint for Excellence

• Guide for implementing both the VA Strategic Plan and the VHA Strategic Goals and Objectives.

• Will help VHA improve service delivery, and rebuild public trust and faith in VA’s health care system.

• The Blueprint for Excellence empowers you to harness your creativity and knowledge to improve service delivery and set the course for long-term excellence.

• Volunteers, Patient Advocates, and Veteran Service Organizations can act as advocates to implement VA strategies to empower Veterans to be proactive about their health.

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
VHA Blueprint: What We Can Do

- Work to distribute positive stories of Veterans in your facility.
- Get to know the Veterans you serve. Some examples include: Making patient visitations, in the hallways, during your assignment(s) and at Veteran-related events.
- Share resources that will help integrate Veteran’s health, family and peer-to-peer support, and community programs.
- Let Veterans and families know they’re at the center of the health care team, involving them every step of the way.

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Tracking Hours

• Volunteers must sign-in before their tour on the Voluntary Service computer kiosk to record their hours.

• Locations without sign-in computers use sign in sheets.

• If you cannot find any other way to sign in, please leave a message on our voicemail or email us at: VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov

• Sign-in locations:
  • Computer kiosk in Voluntary Service offices at Medical Centers
  • Check with your clinic for sign-in locations
Timekeeping Reminders

• There is only a sign-in, not a sign-out.
• Estimate your service, rounding up your hours to the next whole hour.
• If your estimate differs from actual, please do your best to make it up next time.
• If the computer is down, or you can’t make it to one, use a sign-in sheet or contact us.
• Your volunteer hours are tracked for awards/recognition and also to quantify the value of volunteer contributions. Please make sure you sign in!
• If you are a member of more than one organization please specify/select the organization to receive credit.
Parking

• Parking passes are issued upon completion of the onboarding procedures. Check with Voluntary Service on your sites requirements.

• Limited Volunteer parking is available at each Medical Center site and is on a first come, first serve basis.

• Other sites have general parking.

• For additional parking contact appropriate Voluntary Service office.
Meals

- Meals are available for volunteers at the VA Medical Centers.

- You must present meal ticket to receive meal, which is good for up to $6.00 at the Canteen or coffee shop. No change will be given, can only be for food, and you must pay any overage. The meal ticket is only valid on the day you volunteer.

- Those volunteers in Outpatient clinics will need to check their local policy.
Background Investigations

• Background investigations are performed on ALL potential Volunteers prior to position assignment.

• Additional more thorough background investigations are performed on Volunteers with assignments requiring computer access.

• Results are reviewed case by case. In most cases, minor offenses will not be a disqualifier. More serious offenses may limit volunteer activity. For example, a recent drug charge may prevent a volunteer from serving in the pharmacy. Identity theft and recent violent offenses may result in non-appointment.

• Volunteers under the age 18 will not have background investigations performed.

• Volunteers who turn 18 while volunteering have background investigations performed.
Volunteer ID Cards

• Approved volunteers have ID cards issued by the PIV office, our local issuing authority.

• Badges are issued after background check clearance – sorry for the inconvenience as you may have to return to the medical center to get your badge.

• Local procedure will determine how Volunteers receive their badge at outpatient clinics.

• Volunteer ID's must be worn at all times while volunteering at any VA facility and is not to be worn when off duty.

• ID badges are the property of the United States Government. You must turn your card into Voluntary Service if you stop volunteering, or upon request.

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Infection Control

- Infection control practices include:
  - Sneezing or coughing into a tissue or upper sleeve, rather than into your hands; discard tissue into wastebasket and then clean your hands.
  - Avoiding patient contact when you have a respiratory infection or cold.
  - Staying home when you have symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, skin rash, the flu, or any other symptoms.
  - Keeping appropriate vaccinations current (influenza, tetanus, etc.)
Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and infections.

Hand Washing Technique – Takes 20 seconds and includes the following steps:

1. Wet hands
2. Apply soap
3. Work up lather for 15 seconds
4. Rinse hands
5. Dry hands with paper towel
6. Turn off water faucet with paper towel

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Hand Hygiene

You must wash your hands:

- Before and after work shifts
- Before and after each contact with a patient or objects used by the patient (i.e. pushing wheelchairs or stretchers)
- Before eating, drinking, or handling food
- After restroom use, smoking, eating, grooming, touching face, hair, money, etc.
- Anytime your hands are dirty or may be contaminated
Hand Hygiene

• Alcohol sanitizers are effective and may be used instead of soap and water unless your hands are dirty or contaminated.

• Hand sanitizer dispensers are located outside of each inpatient area and room as well as other common locations.
Isolation Precaution

- Isolation precaution prevents the spread of infection among patients, hospital personnel, volunteers, and visitors.

- Volunteers will not enter any patient’s room that is marked with a precaution sign. Ask nursing staff for assistance if you have any questions.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE includes:
  - Disposable Gowns
  - Caps
  - Masks
  - Gloves
  - Face shields/eye shields
  - Shoe covers
- Volunteers should only wear PPE as directed by supervisor and medical staff
- **Do not** walk through the facility wearing PPE. Dispose of used equipment before leaving patient room
Confidentiality & Privacy

• What is Patient Confidentiality?
  • The obligation of others to keep an individual's personal information protected, disclosing it only within the bounds of professional and legal standards

• What is Patient Privacy?
  • Freedom from unjustified intrusion into one's personal life

What’s the difference? Looking into records without a “need to know” is a privacy violation. Sharing protected information, whether or not you have a need to know it, is a confidentiality violation.

VA takes patient privacy and confidentiality seriously
  – you should too!
What Are Your Responsibilities?

• “Volunteers, as WOC employees, are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a and 38 U.S.C. Sections 5701 and 7332) and all VA regulations implementing that statute. Accordingly, volunteers must assist VA staff in safeguarding the privacy of patient information accessed during the course of their duties at the VA facility. Volunteers are not exempt from prosecution or fine in the case of an unlawful release of patient information” – VHA Handbook Section 7a

• Unauthorized request for, or release of confidential patient information is considered a misdemeanor, and subject to up to $5,000 fine
What Are Your Responsibilities?

• As a VA Volunteer you are required to protect information from release and to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and security of health information.

• If you accidentally obtain confidential information, do not release – return to sender!

• If you have a volunteer assignment requiring computer access, you are agreeing and accepting the responsibility of protecting VA information when you agree to the Rules of Behavior – please take seriously.

• If you see a security breach (unauthorized use, suspect fraud, or see/find PHI) report it immediately!
Cameras, Video Equipment, etc.

- Patient privacy includes the right to not be photographed without consent. Please respect our Veteran’s privacy by refraining from taking pictures of them without prior coordination.

- Voluntary Service and Public Affairs have forms to be filled out by a Veteran giving their permission to be photographed. These forms include information on who is taking the picture and where it will be used. Photographs containing Veterans are not to be taken unless these forms are signed.

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Patient Abuse

• Patient abuse or neglect is any action or failure to act which causes unreasonable suffering or harm to the patient.

• It is the policy of the VA that no patient is to be mistreated or abused in any way: physically, psychologically, sexually or verbally by any employee, volunteer, student or visitor.

• Volunteers who witness any kind of abuse toward a patient must promptly report it to their immediate supervisor or the VAVS staff and be prepared to write a statement.
Doing What's Right

• Be respectful to everyone you work with including patients, co-workers, supervisors, staff members, and affiliates.

• Provide constructive feedback sensitively; be empathetic.

• Compose yourself professionally.

• Be reliable. Keep your word with your assignments.

• Contribute your best to enhance and maintain the integrity of the VA.

• Demonstrate courteous, warm, and kind behaviors in every interaction.

• Use appropriate language and avoid vulgar behavior.
Politics, Religion & Money

• Because VA facilities are voter registration stations, no material (including clothing) can be brought into the facility by VA staff (including volunteers) promoting a party or candidate.

• Only VA Chaplains can provide spiritual guidance.

• Volunteers cannot engage in ANY financial transaction with a Veteran patient to include sales, loans, gifts, check cashing, and money handling. Gratuities are prohibited.

• Only VA Voluntary Service can accept donations.

• If you see a compliance issue, inform Voluntary Service or our Compliance Officer.
What is Sexual Harassment?

• Sexually-oriented verbal kidding, teasing, or jokes.
• Repeated sexual flirtations, advances or propositions.
• Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
• Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or the individual’s appearance.
• Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
• Subtle pressure for sexual activity.
• Unwanted physical contact such as patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against another’s body.
What To Do If You Experience Sexual Harassment

- Tell the person the behavior is unwanted, unwelcomed, or unsolicited, and to stop
- Keep a record
- Ask co-workers if they observed the behavior
- Contact supervisor or Voluntary Service staff immediately
Facility Safety

• Weapons and alcohol of any kind are prohibited on VA property
• Wear appropriate clothing and shoes for your assignment
• If machinery is used during an assignment, follow safety rules
• This is a non-smoking facility - smoking is restricted to designated areas
• For safety reasons, food prepared in a private home may not be given to patients
• Only foods prepared by a commercial licensed/inspected food establishment may be received and served to groups
• Be cautious about giving personal information to patients
• Report all injuries to your supervisor, no matter how small
Suspicious Activity

- **Potential signs of threats**
  - No ID badge
  - Visible signs of nervousness (like excessive sweating)
  - Inappropriate clothing that is excessively baggy or too heavy in warm weather

- **If you feel threatened**
  - Avoid confrontation
  - Walk away
  - Report immediately to Police Service
  - If you can’t get away from the aggressor, scream for help

**Contact the VA Police Department to report.**
Suspicious Bags or Boxes

• Ask yourself:
  • Is the bag or box unattended?
  • Do you see an unknown substance?
  • Do you smell a strange odor?

• If you answered “yes” to any of the above, then:
  • Do not touch the bag
  • Call VA Police Department
  • Keep your eyes on the bag until the police arrive to ensure no one takes it by mistake

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Remember:
When in Doubt, Call Police Service

From any VA phone:
Emergency – 40
Non-emergency – 0
From a non-VA phone/your cell phone – call 911

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Hazardous Material

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) developed the Hazard Communication Standard (also known as the Right-To-Know standard) to protect workers from chemical hazards. As a volunteer, you won’t be required to handle any hazardous materials. If an instance occurs where you feel you must, ask your supervisor for instructions.

- **Do not** handle needles, syringes, or other sharps. Request Nursing, Medical, or other technical personnel to dispose of such equipment.

- **Do not** attempt to clean up any spills, vomitus, or expectoration. Contact Environmental Management Service to decontaminate the area.
Fire Equipment

- Fire alarm systems in hallways
- Sprinkler systems in all buildings
- Fire extinguishers throughout facility

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Responding to a Fire

RACE

- **Rescue**
  - Get patients and those unable to escape fire clear of danger
- **Alarm**
  - Pull fire alarm or call 0
- **Confine**
  - Close doors to inhibit spread of fire
- **Extinguish or Evacuate**
  - In the case of small, isolated fires, extinguish IF you are able. In case of large fires, evacuate yourself and those unable to evacuate themselves.
Fire Extinguishers

• When using a fire extinguishers:
  
  PASS

  • **Pull** the pin
  • **Aim** nozzle at the base of the flames
  • **Squeeze** the handle
  • **Sweep** the extinguisher back and forth across the fire until the fire is extinguished
Backup Power

• **Disruption of Utility Systems:** The Medical Centers are on backup generators. **DO NOT** use the elevators during periods of sporadic power outages, in the event of a fire, or any other occurrence which may cause you to be trapped in the elevator.
Mobility Issues

• When assisting Veteran patients, **communication is key**
• Always ask the Veteran if they need or want assistance with mobility or pushing a wheelchair before lending assistance
• Do not attempt to assist the Veteran once they have indicated they do not want or need assistance
Dress Code

“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”
Dress Code

• Clothing with offensive or potentially inflammatory messages are not permitted
• Open-toed shoes are not appropriate in patient care areas or where risk of injury to exposed feet is possible.
• Clothing appropriate for each Volunteer assignment may be different. You are a reflection of the VA staff, dress appropriately.
• Shorts are not to be worn while Volunteering. (Position specific exemptions apply.)
Code of Conduct

• Professional boundaries must be maintained between staff (including volunteers) and patients.

• No money transactions of any kind can be done between Volunteers, Employees, and Veterans. This includes tips, donations, payments of meals, Canteen transactions, gift, etc.

• Voluntary Services cannot be used to promote an agenda from a religious, social, or personal area to include politics, membership of private organizations, or fundraising.
Thank You!

• On behalf of the 138,000 Veterans served annually by the North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System, we thank you for your interest in serving those who served. Without volunteers like you, we would be unable to provide the exceptional level of care our Veterans deserve.

• Please return to the home page to print out and take the quiz to be submitted with your application.