



Ottawa Food Bank

2024

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

You are a critical part of achieving our vision; healthy, accessible, sustainable food for all.

With the gift of your time, you are improving the lives of families and individuals throughout Ottawa.



Message from the Volunteer Engagement Team

Thank you for volunteering your time in support of the Ottawa Food Bank.

We are pleased to welcome you aboard and are grateful for the support and benefits that you will undoubtedly offer to our organization.

Since its inception in 1984, the Ottawa Food Bank has relied on the support and enthusiasm of volunteers, like you, who enhance our mission of providing food to Ottawa's most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your invaluable help.

In the following pages, you will find information to orient you to the Ottawa Food Bank and help you become more familiar with our programs, policies, and procedures. Please review the contents of this handbook and refer to it regularly as you establish your role as a volunteer.

Welcome to the team of **#OttawasBestVolunteers!**

Jo-Anne Turple, CVA

Manager of Volunteer Resources

Joanne@ottawafoodbank.ca

Adam Janes, CVA

Coordinator of Volunteer Resources

Adame@ottawafoodbank.ca

Message from the Director of People and Culture

Thank you for choosing to support the Ottawa Food Bank as a volunteer.

You are joining a team that is dedicated to building a community where everyone has access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.

As a volunteer, you are a critical part of achieving our vision; healthy, accessible, sustainable food for all. With the gift of your time, you are improving the lives of families and individuals throughout Ottawa.

I hope you enjoy volunteering with the Ottawa Food Bank.

Please share any feedback about your volunteer experience with me or our Volunteer Engagement Team.

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us!

Martin Hajek

Director of People and Culture

Martin@ottawafoodbank.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK

Overview

Volunteer Program

Ottawa Food Bank Organizational Overview

SECTION TWO: VOLUNTEERING AT THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK

Benefits of Volunteering

Roles Within The Volunteer Program

Volunteer

Volunteer Supervisor

Volunteer Engagement Team

Things to Know as a Volunteer

Commitment

Attendance

Respect

Confidentiality

Ottawa Food Bank Equipment Use

Volunteer Dismissal

SECTION THREE: WORKPLACE OVERVIEW

Ottawa Food Bank Warehouse and Office

Parking

Public Transit

Volunteer Lounge

Off-Site Volunteering

Health and Safety Information

Situational Safety Protocols

Warehouse

Community Harvest Farm

Special Events

Emergency Procedures

Incident Reports

**SECTION ONE:
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK**

Overview

Founded in 1984, the Ottawa Food Bank continues to provide fresh and non-perishable food, as well as supplies such as diapers, toiletries, and cleaning supplies to its network of over 100 food programs across the city of Ottawa.

Our main goal is to provide food relief to people in need in our city while also working towards doing food banking better and making change.

We are doing this by focusing on four areas:

1. **Improving access to healthy food**
2. **Growing capacity and resilience in our food bank network**
3. **Cultivating social innovation in food banking**
4. **Participating in advocacy and social change**

Volunteer Program

The purpose of our Volunteer Program is to enhance and support the services, administration, and mission of the Ottawa Food Bank by engaging individuals in a variety of volunteer positions.

The Ottawa Food Bank Volunteer Program's objectives are to:

- Support and enhance the mission of the Ottawa Food Bank
- Enhance human resources and provide volunteer engagement where appropriate
- Offer relevant volunteer placements that contribute to volunteers' personal and/or
- Professional development in a safe and positive working environment
- Raise the profile of volunteers within the organization and in the wider community
- Seek, consider, and value feedback from our volunteers
- Become a model of best practices in volunteer management

As a volunteer with the Ottawa Food Bank, you may be involved in supporting any number of activities and departments.

Regardless of your role(s), the Volunteer Engagement Team, headed by the **Volunteer Manager, Jo-Anne Turple**, and **Coordinator, Adam Janes**, are excited to help support and lead you through a meaningful and impactful volunteering experience.

Whether volunteering onsite or remotely, you will also be paired up with a skilled and knowledgeable staff volunteer supervisor to ensure you are well-supported in your volunteer activities.

Ottawa Food Bank Organizational Overview

Below are the various departments and a list of some of their main responsibilities at the Ottawa Food Bank. In italics next to those responsibilities are where we currently have volunteer roles that support those functions.

Executive Team

- Our CEO and executive assistant

Communications and Development Team

- Fundraising
- *Special events (Special event volunteers)*
- Donor relations
- Communications
- Community Engagement and Events Team
- Community fundraising events
- Special events
- Individual/group online fundraising events
- *Ottawa Food Bank signature events (Special event volunteers)*
- *Food drives (Special event volunteers)*

Community Harvest Team

- Manages farm
- *Grows fresh produce for distribution (Community Harvest volunteers)*

Finance and Administration Team

- Finance and Administration
- *Front reception (Admin support volunteers)*

People and Culture Team

- Human resources
- Volunteer engagement

Operations Team

- *Warehouse operation (Food sorting, hamper packing, hamper delivery, data input volunteers)*
- Transportation fleet

Programs and Planning Team

- Agency support
- Diet and nutrition
- Education and programing
- Community development



**SECTION TWO:
VOLUNTEERING AT THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK**

Benefits of Volunteering

People are motivated to volunteer and support the Ottawa Food Bank for a variety of reasons. We welcome and benefit from the services of volunteers whose motivations and interests are diverse.

In return, we hope that during your time with us, you will experience one or more of the following:

- The opportunity to contribute your knowledge, skills, and experience towards making a
- Genuine difference for those experiencing food insecurity in our city
- Useful training and orientations in a variety of settings, as well as meaningful work experiences
- The opportunity to join the Ottawa Food Bank community and be included in events, activities, and updates
- Giving back to the community while meeting wonderful and diverse new people along the way

Roles Within the Volunteer Program

Volunteer

Volunteers are people's rewards.

As a volunteer, you may take on one or more of our volunteer opportunities that support the Ottawa Food Bank's vision and mission.

As a volunteer, you will:

- Receive direction and guidance on your volunteer work from your Volunteer Supervisor
- Perform the tasks you have agreed upon
- Adhere to your agreed schedule and if anything changes, notify the Volunteer Coordinator/Manager or cancel your shift
- Report any issues or problems to Ottawa Food Bank staff

Roles Within the Volunteer Program

Volunteer Supervisor

Volunteer supervisors are the Ottawa Food Bank employees who directly supervise a volunteer activity.

They are responsible for giving you direction and orientation for your work while also providing the resources needed to perform your volunteer duties.

The Volunteer Supervisor is the first point of contact for volunteers who have questions about their work and working conditions.

The Volunteer Supervisor:

- Works with the Volunteer Coordinator to create volunteer job descriptions
- Ensures you have an appropriate work environment and the resources required to fulfill your duties
- Provides you with constructive feedback and support for your work
- Maintains a safe and respectful working environment

Roles Within the Volunteer Program

Volunteer Engagement Team

The Ottawa Food Bank's Volunteer Coordinator and Manager make up the Volunteer Engagement Team (VET).

The VET is responsible for ensuring the program meets the needs of both the organization and the volunteers.

The VET is also responsible for implementing supporting policies and procedures in consultation with the Ottawa Food Bank's Director of People and Culture.

The Volunteer Coordinator:

- Recruits and screens individual volunteers for all volunteer positions
- Creates volunteer job descriptions in consultation with Volunteer Manager and Supervisors
- Maintains volunteer records
- Works with staff to support their supervisory roles
- Communicates with staff and volunteers on issues and opportunities related to volunteering
- Ensures volunteers are included and recognized within the Ottawa Food Bank

Roles Within the Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Manager:

- Works with corporate and group volunteers for all volunteer positions
- Creates volunteer job descriptions in consultation with Volunteer Coordinator and Supervisors
- Maintains volunteer records and leads administration of the volunteer program
- Works with staff to support their supervisory roles
- Leads the overall volunteer program at Ottawa Food Bank
- Ensures volunteers are included and recognized within the Ottawa Food Bank

Things to know as a Volunteer

As a volunteer at the Ottawa Food Bank, you are relied upon to support the work of the Ottawa Food Bank and to represent the organization with professionalism and integrity. The following section will inform you of the Ottawa Food Bank's expectations of volunteers.

As one of **#OttawasBestVolunteers**, we consider you an ambassador of the Ottawa Food Bank. If you have any questions about this section or anything else related to expectations, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Role as an Ambassador

We encourage our volunteers to share with their friends and family general information regarding the Ottawa Food Bank and the work we do, including your volunteer experiences. Volunteers provide a valuable front-line account of the work done by the Ottawa Food Bank and the impact in our community. It is important to remember however, that as a volunteer, you do not speak on behalf the Ottawa Food Bank in an official capacity.

Requests for official information, including media, should always be referred the Ottawa Food Bank's communications team.

Things to know as a Volunteer

Commitment

The Ottawa Food Bank volunteer program does not have a minimum length of service commitment attached to our volunteer roles. We attempt to be flexible with scheduling, whenever possible, in conjunction with the operational needs of the organization.

Attendance

The work performed by volunteers is vital to Ottawa Food Bank's daily operation at our warehouse and farm, and during special events. Please arrive on time for your scheduled shifts and cancel shifts you are not able to attend. Cancelling via the online volunteer system allows another volunteer the opportunity to sign up.

Respect

The Ottawa Food Bank promotes a welcoming, respectful, and equitable work environment. Immediately alert your Volunteer Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if you feel that you are not being treated in a respectful manner. The Ottawa Food Bank takes these matters very seriously and steps will be taken immediately to address any such issues.

Confidentiality

Ottawa Food Bank volunteers hold positions of trust. As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any Ottawa Food Bank information as well as any confidential client or donor data being used or discussed while fulfilling your volunteer duties. To participate as a volunteer in select roles, you must understand, agree to, and accept a Confidentiality Clause with your volunteer waiver. Please bring any questions or concerns about confidentiality to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Things to know as a Volunteer

Ottawa Food Bank Equipment Use

Volunteers in an administration role will be required to use a variety of office equipment. Please ensure that you are fully trained on how to properly operate any equipment before you use it. If ever you are uncertain, please ask your Volunteer Supervisor or another member of the staff. This equipment could include, but is not limited to, the mail machine, photocopier, phone system, and more.

Volunteers in a food sorting or Community Harvest role are not permitted to use equipment in the warehouse or on the farm unless professionally licensed and sanctioned to do so by the Ottawa Food Bank.

The Ottawa Food Bank does not permit the unauthorized removal of any product from the warehouse.

Volunteer Dismissal

In most cases of conflict or challenge, the Ottawa Food Bank commits to finding a mutually suitable resolution. There are, however, serious situations when it is necessary to terminate a volunteer's time with the Ottawa Food Bank.

The Ottawa Food Bank will immediately dismiss any volunteer:

Who does not work in a respectful manner or exhibits any threatening behaviour, either verbally or physically, to other volunteers, Ottawa Food Bank staff, or associates

Who attends a volunteer role in an impaired state

Who blatantly disregards health and safety protocols

For the theft or intentional damage of Ottawa Food Bank property or the property of other volunteers, Ottawa Food Bank staff, or associates



**SECTION THREE:
WORKPLACE OVERVIEW**

Ottawa Food Bank Warehouse and Office

The Ottawa Food Bank warehouse and offices are located at 2001 Bantree St. Ottawa Ontario. The Ottawa Food Bank is open Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Parking

Free parking is available in our parking lot along the front of the building, Bantree Street side, for volunteers.

Public Transit

The Ottawa Food Bank is accessible by OC Transpo, route 47. The nearest bus stops are at Bantree and Sheffield, stop #7314, or Bantree and Old Innis, stop # 4047. Route 42 stops at Bantree and Innis, stops # 7854 and 8530. Please consult the [OC Transpo travel planner](#) for the most current route information.

Volunteer Lounge

When working onsite at the Ottawa Food Bank, volunteers are invited to use the Volunteer Lounge, including its kitchen amenities and lockers.

- The Ottawa Food Bank has a Volunteer Lounge for the comfort of volunteering individuals
- Complimentary coffee, tea, and water is available
- Lockers, with locks, are available for use(volunteers are also welcome to bring their own lock)
- Free Wi-Fi is also available in the volunteer lounge
- We request that volunteers assist in keeping the volunteer lounge a clean and tidy space

Volunteer roles that take place on site or originate at the Ottawa Food Bank include:

- Food Sorting
- Administrative Support
- Operational Support

Off-Site Volunteering

Off-site volunteer roles include working at our Community Harvest Farm and assisting at special events.

Our **Community Harvest Farm** grows produce on approximately 8 acres of farmland and is located south of Stittsville. Annually, from May through to October, Community Harvest volunteers assist with the growing cycle of over 20 different crops that will be harvested and distributed to our community partners.

Special Events take place throughout the year and at various locations. Special event volunteers assist Ottawa Food Bank staff to food and fund raise, as well as act as ambassadors for the Ottawa Food Bank by thanking donors and sharing general information about the Ottawa Food Bank. Special events include food drives, parades, concerts, sports games, and more.

Health and Safety Information

The Ottawa Food Bank is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

Safety and security are shared responsibilities, and any potential safety hazard or security breach must be reported immediately. As a volunteer, you can refuse any work that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Any concerns should be brought to the VET and this information will be immediately forwarded to the Ottawa Food Bank's Joint Health and Safety Committee for review.

While Ottawa Food Bank staff provide supervision and direction for volunteer activities, volunteers must be able to follow directions and health and safety protocols, and work independently. Volunteers unable to volunteer independently must be supported by an accompanying adult who will aid during the volunteer shift.

Situational Safety Protocols

Warehouse

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information, including being alert when equipment is being operated in the volunteer work area.
- Volunteers must stay in designated volunteer areas unless otherwise authorized by Ottawa Food Bank staff
- Volunteers must wear closed-toed shoes - open shoes or sandals are not permitted in the warehouse
- Volunteers are not permitted to use their cell phones/earphones in the warehouse - please use your cell phone in the volunteer lounge

Community Harvest Farm

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information including direction in severe weather conditions
- Volunteers must stay in designated volunteer areas unless otherwise authorized by Ottawa Food Bank staff
- Volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes suitable for working in all types of field conditions
- Volunteers must dress according to the weather
- Volunteers are encouraged to ensure they have sunscreen, bug spray, a hat, and a suitable amount of water to drink

Situational Safety Protocols

Special Events

- Volunteers must follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff regarding safety information or emergency information specific to the event location
- Volunteers are not permitted to transport or count monetary donations as per Ottawa Food Bank's current cash handling policy

Emergency Procedures

The onsite environment of the Ottawa Food Bank is not commonly associated with danger or substantial risk, but accidents and injuries can occur, and health emergencies do arise. Incidents are also a possibility when volunteering off-site at special events or at our Community Harvest farm. **Do not hesitate to call 911 in an emergency.** Please ensure your Volunteer Supervisor is informed immediately of any emergency and all volunteers follow the supervisor's instruction during an emergency.

First aid kits can be found on-site at the Ottawa Food Bank in designated areas marked by signage. They can be found at reception, in the warehouse, and in our designated first aid room. A first aid kit is also available at our Community Harvest farm and our special events team travels with a first aid kit as well. There is also an AED at reception.

Several Ottawa Food Bank employees are certified in First Aid and/or CPR. A list of these employees is posted by the first aid kits at the Ottawa Food Bank. Community Harvest farm staff are also First Aid and/or CPR certified.

In case of fire, please follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank staff and exit the building immediately. The Ottawa Food Bank is equipped with fire alarm pulls in designated areas.

In case of a severe weather event at the farm or special event, please follow the direction of Ottawa Food Bank or venue staff who will direct volunteers to a safe area.

Incident Reports

Volunteers who are hurt or injured while executing their volunteer duties are required to report. This report gathers information on the circumstances surrounding the injury and is shared with the Ottawa Food Bank Joint Health and Safety Committee for evaluation and follow up.

Volunteers who witness an accident or injury may also be asked to complete an incident report. Incident report forms can be found in any Ottawa Food Bank first aid kit or can be requested from any Ottawa Food Bank staff.

Questions? Concerns?

Please contact the Ottawa Food Bank Volunteer Engagement Team.

Jo-Anne Turple

Manager, Volunteer Resources

joanne@ottawafoodbank.ca

613-745-7001 extension 120

Adam Janes

Coordinator, Volunteer Resources

adame@ottawafoodbank.ca

613-745-7001 extension 138

General Questions : **volunteere@ottawafoodbank.ca**



THANK YOU!

**FOR CHOOSING TO VOLUNTEER WITH
THE OTTAWA FOOD BANK**