



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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## **Welcome**

Dear volunteer,

We are delighted you have chosen to volunteer with Fort Bend Women's Center. We know your time is precious and we are honored that you are willing to spend some of it with us. Volunteers are at the very heart of our non-profit organization. Every day our agency depends on volunteers like you to ensure that we operate efficiently and successfully. It's our goal to make sure anyone who gives their time to us feels valued, understood, and proud to be part of our organization. Thank you for taking the time to help us bring healing and hope to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

This handbook will explain things you need to know about volunteering with us and provide information that will support your volunteering role. The handbook's purpose is to inspire volunteers and build a foundation for a successful, meaningful, and hopefully lasting relationship in the future.

Vita Goodell  
CEO

## **FBWC Mission Statement**

Our mission is to assist ALL survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children to achieve safety and self-sufficiency while striving to prevent violence against women.

## **FBWC Core Values (SPIRIT)**

As a member of the team, you are expected to reflect the following core values (SPIRIT)

**Service-** We will do whatever it takes to help survivors and their kids. We are here to serve through compassion, empowerment, and advocacy.

**Passion-** We are passionate about helping survivors live free of abuse and about preventing domestic and sexual violence into the future.

**Integrity-** always do what we say we will do for the people we serve. We use funds exactly as our funders have specified. We take survivor confidentiality and safety very seriously.

**Respect-** We have respect for the people we serve and our customers, donors, and coworkers. We expect the best from ourselves and all with whom we interact.

**Innovation-** We are open and responsive to new ideas and have the flexibility to incorporate those ideas into our culture. We are forward-thinking and creative in our interactions with survivors, customers, and the community. We empower our coworkers and volunteers to bring up new ideas and approaches to accomplish our mission.

**Teamwork-** We work together within our agency and the community for the needs of survivors and their children. We never say, "it's not my job."

## **FBWC History and Success**

**1980-** FBWC opens with a crisis hotline and the first shelter opens in a rented home.

**1989-** First Resale store opens.

**1990-** Crisis hotline expanded to 24/7

**1992-** New program introduced through a University of Houston research project significantly reduced the

rate of women returning to their batterer.

**1998-** Established a multi-tier focus: shelter, education/outreach, home-based case management, and counseling services

**2001-** New emergency shelter opens & accommodates

**2003-** Second Resale store opens in Stafford

**2008-** Third Resale store opens in Mission Bend

**2009-** Wellness and Stability program started to serve the most vulnerable survivors

**2014-** New purpose-built administration and PennyWise store opens in Richmond

**2015-** Present: Innovative trauma-reducing initiatives expanded, including neurofeedback, children's programs, and mobile services

**2018-** FBWC purchases the Rio Bend property

**2020-** FBWC celebrates 40 years of bringing Healing and Hope to over 50,000 survivors

**2022-** FBWC rebrands Pennywise resale store to become Thriftwise.

**Today** FBWC invites you to join us on this journey and make history together!

## **Code of Conduct**

To ensure a positive and respectful environment, we ask all volunteers to adhere to the following code of conduct:

### **1. Respect and Dignity**

- Treat all staff, other volunteers, and those we serve with respect and dignity.
- Embrace diversity and be inclusive of all people, regardless of race, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Avoid using language or behavior that is discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate.
- Refrain from gossiping.

## **2. Confidentiality**

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals associated with the Fort Bend Women's Center.
- Do not disclose any personal or sensitive information without appropriate authorization.
- Maintain confidentiality of all discussions and information learned while volunteering.
- Never exchange personal contact information with clientele or provide any services outside the scope and mission of FBWC.

## **3. Professionalism**

- Conduct yourself professionally at all times while representing the organization.
- Arrive on time for your scheduled shifts and inform your supervisor in advance if you are unable to attend.
- Wear appropriate attire for your volunteer activities.
- Be patient, courteous, and respectful with others.
- Keep a positive open communication with staff and leadership.

## **4. Safety and Well-being**

- Prioritize the safety and well-being of yourself and others.
- Follow all safety guidelines and instructions provided by staff.
- Report any accidents, injuries, or unsafe conditions to a staff member immediately.
- Wear closed-toe, slip-free shoes.

## **5. Integrity and Honesty**

- Act with integrity and honesty in all interactions and activities.
- Be truthful when logging your volunteer hours and ensure accuracy in reporting your time.
- Address any issues or concerns promptly with a supervisor.
- Always focus on resolving issues and providing solutions.
- Donations are to be used as the donor has requested. No exceptions.
- Be honest in your day-to-day operations at Thriftwise resale stores and programs.
- Respect the purchase policy.

## **7. Teamwork and Collaboration**

- Work collaboratively with staff and other volunteers to achieve common goals.
- Be open to feedback and suggestions for improvement.

- Support and encourage fellow volunteers and contribute to a positive team environment.

### **8. Substance Use**

- Do not use drugs or alcohol while volunteering or attending volunteer-related events.
- Do not volunteer if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

By volunteering with the Fort Bend Women’s Center, you agree to abide by this code of conduct. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our mission.

Any violation of this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of your volunteer position. We reserve the right to address any behavior that goes against our values and principles.

### **Expectations**

FBWC expects you to be a volunteer with SPIRIT-Service; Passionate; Integrity; Respect; Innovative and Teamwork in all your volunteering roles. Honor your commitment to our program and notify us of any changes, being prompt and reliable. Cooperate with leadership, staff, and fellow volunteers by being polite, respectful, and courteous at all times. **Respect those in leadership and understand their instructions represent the best intentions for the agency.** Comply with all policies and procedures and keep all communications with or concerning the families in our program confidential. Document your volunteer time.

***Please ask questions if you are not sure what is expected of you.***

Out of respect for your commitment, time, and confidentiality, ongoing support and training from all staff; an inclusive, welcoming culture; to be recognized and appreciated for your work with the right to say no to projects and tasks that make you uncomfortable.

### **Volunteer Policies and Procedures**

As a new volunteer, policies and procedures are essential for creating a positive, productive, and safe environment where all volunteers can thrive. By understanding and adhering to these guidelines, you contribute to the organization’s success and enhance your own volunteer experience.

### **Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination**



Fort Bend Women's Center provides equal volunteering opportunities for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit the performance of essential job as dependability and reliability. We are dedicated to ensuring that our volunteer program is accessible and inclusive for everyone.

All volunteer recruitment, selection, and management processes will be conducted without discrimination or bias. Volunteers will be evaluated based on their skills, qualifications, and commitment to the organization's mission. The organization will make reasonable accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in volunteer activities.

### **Confidentiality**

FBWC is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all personal, sensitive, and proprietary information to which volunteers may be exposed during their service. Volunteers are expected to respect and protect the confidentiality of such information at all times, both during and after their period of service.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information about clients, including names, contact details, personal histories, health records, financial information, and any other identifying details.
- Information about staff, volunteers, and donors that is not publicly available.
- Internal policies, procedures, and strategic plans.
- Financial data, donor lists, and fundraising strategies.
- Any proprietary information that pertains to the operation and management of the organization.

To protect the identity and safety of our clients and to maintain the confidentiality of the shelter location, all volunteers must sign the confidentiality agreement every year, promising not to divulge the identity or any other information of any client.

We have an obligation to our clients to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every client served by Fort Bend Women's Center has the right to confidentiality. However, every volunteer must use their best judgment. If you are aware of a client issue that requires immediate help, please inform your immediate supervisor.

As you work with staff, information on a confidential matter may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need

to know it. This applies to making copies of any Fort Bend Women's Center records, reports, or documents without prior approval. Release of any confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service.

### **Background Checks**

As part of our volunteer screening process, we conduct background checks to verify the suitability of volunteers for specific roles and to protect the integrity of our programs. Volunteers who will be working with children are required to get a criminal history background check before volunteering, and any other additional screening form required by law. Certain findings, such as a history of violent crimes, theft, or offenses related to the responsibilities of the volunteer position, may disqualify an individual from volunteering. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the nature of the offense, the time elapsed, and any other relevant factors.

All information obtained during the background check process will be confidential and used solely for the purpose of volunteer screening. Only authorized personnel will have access to this information.

Volunteers who are disqualified based on their background check results will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to discuss the findings and provide additional information or context.

Background checks are mandatory for any volunteering activity at our shelter and with direct-client services. Volunteers will be asked to repeat the screening process every year.

### **Media Release**

FBWC seeks to promote its mission, programs, and volunteer activities through various media channels, including print, digital, and social media. To do so effectively, we may capture and use photos, videos, and other media of our volunteers. By agreeing to this policy, volunteers consent to the use of their likeness and media by the organization. The media may be used for purposes such as promoting the organization, raising awareness, fundraising, and educational content. Volunteers will not receive any compensation for the use of their photos, videos, or other media. Participation is voluntary, and the media is used solely for the organization's purposes.

Volunteers have the right to revoke their consent at any time by submitting a written request to the Volunteer Coordinator. FBWC will make reasonable efforts to discontinue the use of the media upon receipt of the revocation request.

### **Liability Release**

In consideration of being allowed to participate in volunteer activities, you agree to release and hold harmless the Fort Bend Women's Center, its directors, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action, including but not limited to claims for personal injury, property damage, or death, arising from or related to my participation in these activities.

You acknowledge that participating in volunteer activities involves inherent risks, including but not limited to physical injury, emotional distress, and damage to personal property. You voluntarily assume all risks associated with my participation in these activities.

You authorize the FBWC or other emergency vehicles to transport you to the nearest hospital in case of injury and authorize the hospital to administer the necessary care. You understand the FBWC is not responsible for medical costs associated with any injury.

### **Safety**

FBWC is committed to providing a safe environment for volunteers. We recognize that maintaining safety is a shared responsibility and requires the active participation of all individuals involved in our programs. We are dedicated to adhering to all applicable safety regulations and implementing best practices to ensure the well-being of our volunteers.

Volunteers will receive training on safety procedures and emergency protocols relevant to their roles. Ongoing safety education and awareness will be promoted. Emergency procedures, including evacuation plans, first aid protocols, and contact information for emergency services, will be communicated to all volunteers.

All incidents, accidents, and near-misses involving volunteers must be reported immediately. An incident report form will be completed, and a review will be conducted to prevent future occurrences.

Maintaining the security of Fort Bend Women's Center offices is every volunteer's responsibility. Develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course.

Know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers and familiarize yourself with the proper procedure for using them. Be cautious and aware of who is in our center. Notify a staff member if you have concerns about an individual in the center.

### **Training and Orientation**

Training and orientation will be conducted in a manner that is accessible and engaging for all volunteers.

Staff, interns, and volunteers in direct-client services must attend and complete the Fort Bend Women's Center District Service Training which is certified by the Office of Attorney General Sexual Assault Training Program. In addition, the training includes important information on the impact of domestic violence and programs to help survivors.

Volunteers will receive detailed information about their specific roles, including responsibilities, expectations, and how their work contributes to the organization's mission. They will have access to ongoing training opportunities to develop additional skills and enhance their effectiveness in their roles.

### **Hours Documentation**

As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to document all hours worked. This process helps in recognizing volunteers' contributions, evaluating the impact of our programs, and fulfilling reporting obligations to stakeholders.

Volunteers should record their hours on a daily or weekly basis on our website despite any other time tracking system is required by the school or organization. Please sign in when you begin your volunteer service and sign out when you are finished.

Accurate hours documentation is crucial for recognizing the valuable contributions of our volunteers and maintaining transparency with stakeholders. We appreciate the cooperation of all volunteers in adhering to this policy and contributing to the success of our programs.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Volunteers are critical to Fort Bend Women's Center's mission. To ensure the successful operation of our programs and services, volunteers must adhere to the scheduled times and notify us of any changes.

You are expected to commit to your assigned schedules and be present for the full duration of your shifts unless otherwise arranged with the Volunteer Manager. Volunteers must notify the Volunteer Manager as soon as possible if they are unable to attend their scheduled shift. Notification should be provided at least 24 hours in advance, if possible. Volunteers can contact:

**Genessis Anderson (Volunteer Manager)**

281-344-5759 ext. 5759

[ganderson@fbwc.org](mailto:ganderson@fbwc.org)

**Dress Code**

The dress code policy is designed to promote a positive image, ensure safety, and provide comfort while volunteers perform their duties. Volunteers are expected to adhere to these guidelines and dress appropriately for their assigned roles. Fort Bend Women’s Center has a casual dress code, but we ask that your attire be neat and conservative. If staff feels your attire is out of place, you may be asked to change it into proper attire.

Dress Code:

- T-shirt: FBWC Volunteer T-shirt or your regular T-shirt. Clothing should not have offensive slogans or graphics. No midriff tops or sleeveless shirts are allowed.
- Long Pants: No shorts are allowed. All clothing should be in good condition and clean with no holes or rips: and no excessive fading or ragged bottoms.
- Tennis Shoes: Crocs, sandals, or any open-toed / open-back shoes are no allowed.

FBWC respects cultural and religious attire. Volunteers are welcome to wear clothing or accessories that reflect their cultural or religious practices, provided it adheres to safety and professionalism standards.

While volunteering with Fort Bend Women’s Center, we ask that you wear a name badge to identify yourself as a volunteer. **Maintain good personal hygiene. Hair should be clean and managed in a way that does not interfere with work.**

For special events, volunteers may be required to dress in specific attire (e.g., business casual, themed costumes). Instructions will be provided in advance.

Failure to adhere to the dress code may result in a request to change attire or, in repeated cases, further action as deemed appropriate.

### **Expense Reimbursement**

To support our volunteers, we have established a reimbursement policy to ensure that eligible expenses are reimbursed in a timely and transparent manner. You must have the volunteer coordinator's written authorization before incurring any expense on behalf of Fort Bend Women's Center. To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report accompanied by receipts and approved by your Volunteer Coordinator. Reimbursements will be made via check at the end of the month.

### **Purchases Policy**

Merchandise is donated at the Thriftwise Resale stores to support the mission of the Fort Bend Women's Center. It is your responsibility to be transparent in the purchasing and use of the merchandise we have received as donations from the public.

- Volunteers receive a 20% discount on all merchandise that is sold in the stores. Volunteer discounts cannot be combined with any other percentage-off promotion.
- Any misuse of this privilege or negligence in following the guidelines can lead to further disciplinary action; suspension of 20% discount and/or buying privileges; and up to and including termination of volunteer opportunities.
- Volunteers can only buy items that are already priced and on the sales floor. Setting aside merchandise in the receiving room is not allowed.
- All items must be brought to the register to be checked out unless the item is too big, such as furniture.
- Volunteers are to have a Customer Rewards Account set up to record all sales.
- Only Store Managers and key holders can ring up volunteer purchases.
- All markdowns must follow the same procedures we have for customers.
- Items cannot be held past the close of the business day.
- Volunteer purchases are limited to 10 items per transaction, per day.
- Volunteer purchases can only be for personal use or gift-giving. Items bought under the volunteer discount program cannot be bought with the intent to resell. No exceptions.

ThriftWise Volunteers only- All bagged items will remain behind the register with the volunteer receipt attached. At the end of their shift, the volunteer will pick up their items and meet a manager at the back door to check the volunteer receipt to make sure the receipt matches the items in the bag.

Theft of merchandise given to the Fort Bend Women's Center is punishable by law. If you suspect an employee or other volunteer is stealing, report the situation to your supervisor at once. It is your responsibility as a volunteer of the Fort Bend Women's Center.

### **Conflict of interest**

A conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer's personal, financial, or other interests interfere with or could reasonably be perceived to interfere with their duties and responsibilities at FBWC. This includes situations where a volunteer could benefit personally from their involvement with our organization.

Volunteers must disclose any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of their service. This includes any relationships, financial interests, or activities that could create a conflict. If a conflict of interest is identified, appropriate measures will be taken to mitigate its impact. This may include reassigning duties, limiting access to certain information, or other actions deemed necessary.

Volunteers should avoid any activities or relationships that could lead to a conflict of interest. When in doubt, volunteers should seek guidance from the Volunteer Coordinator. Failure to disclose a potential conflict of interest or to comply with the mitigation measures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the volunteer role.

### **Gifts, Tips, and Soliciting**

Occasionally, volunteers will receive gifts from clients or staff. In general, it is okay to accept cards and other gifts that are under \$10. Use your best judgment when determining whether it is appropriate to accept any gift. Any questions regarding gifts should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator.

When volunteering your time with Fort Bend Women's Center, we ask that you refrain from soliciting any political and religious beliefs. While some of our clients are very religious, we ask that you maintain a personal yet professional relationship with them throughout your time as a volunteer. We ask that you do not solicit your own business enterprise or any other private charities.

### **Unacceptable Activities**

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of Fort Bend Women's Center. If you have questions concerning any unacceptable activities listed, please see the volunteer coordinator for an explanation.

- If a volunteer violates any rules established by Fort Bend Women's Center, including the following rules, that person may be subject to discipline up to, and including, immediate discharge.
- Willful violation of any agency rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is detrimental to Fort Bend Women's Center.
- Willful violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety rules or Fort Bend Women's Center safety practices; failure to wear required safety equipment; tampering with Fort Bend Women's Center or safety equipment.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person.
- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at any Fort Bend Women's Center event designed for the participation of minors.
- Possession or use of all illegal drugs or other illegal substances is prohibited.
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism.
- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons, or explosives on agency property or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence towards anyone on agency premises or when representing Fort Bend Women's Center, fighting, or horseplay, provoking a fight on agency property, or negligent damage of property.
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your volunteer Manager or other staff members.
- Threatening, intimidating, or coercing fellow volunteers on or off the premises – at any time, for any purpose.
- Theft of agency property or the property of fellow volunteers, clients, or staff; unauthorized possession or removal of any agency property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of agency documents.
- Breach of confidentiality of personnel information.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another volunteer on the job; willfully restricting volunteer output or engaging others to do the same.



- Immoral conduct or indecency on agency property.
- Reselling any merchandise purchased in Thriftwise Resale stores.

## **Conflict Resolution**

FBWC is committed to fostering a positive and collaborative environment. Conflicts, when they arise, should be resolved promptly and effectively to maintain harmony and productivity. Volunteers are encouraged to communicate openly and honestly about any concerns or issues they may have. Addressing conflicts early can often prevent them from escalating.

In case of conflicts:

step 1: Direct Communication: Volunteers should first attempt to resolve the conflict directly with the other party involved. This can often be done through a private and respectful conversation.

Step 2: Mediation: If direct communication does not resolve the issue, the volunteer should seek the assistance of a mediator. This can be the Volunteer Manager or another designated staff member.

Step 3: Formal Complaint: If mediation is unsuccessful, the volunteer may file a formal complaint with the Volunteer Manager. The complaint should be in writing and provide detailed information about the conflict.

Step 4: Investigation: The Volunteer Manager will conduct a thorough investigation of the complaint, gathering information from all parties involved. This may include interviews and reviewing any relevant documents or evidence.

Step 5: Resolution: Based on the investigation, the Volunteer Manager will propose a resolution. This may include further mediation, reassignment of duties, or other actions deemed necessary to resolve the conflict.

Step 6: Follow-Up: The Volunteer Manager will follow up with the parties involved to ensure that the resolution is effective and that the conflict has been fully resolved.

All information related to a conflict and its resolution will be kept confidential. Details will only be shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.

FBWC prohibits retaliation against any volunteer who raises a concern or participates in a conflict resolution process. Any volunteer who feels they have been retaliated against should report this immediately to the Volunteer Manager.

## **Harassment**

Fort Bend Women's Center is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, unlawful harassment by anyone, including any supervisor, coworker, or third party, is strictly prohibited. Harassment in any manner against clients, visitors, employees, volunteers, or any other person will not be tolerated. All volunteers are responsible for helping to enforce the policy. Behavior that is not welcome and which is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive should be reported immediately.

Any volunteer who feels has been the subject of harassment (or who has reason to believe that someone else has been the subject of harassment) must notify HR or Volunteer Manager immediately. A prompt investigation of the matter will be made. To the fullest extent practicable, the confidentiality of those involved will be maintained. No one should be presumed to be in violation because an investigation is being conducted. The agency may make its findings at the conclusion of the investigation. However, the individual may be placed on an investigative suspension, a no-fault action, during the investigation process. Anyone who is found to have engaged in prohibited harassment will be subject to appropriate corrective action, up to and including discharge from employment or removal from the volunteer program. Retaliation against anyone for making a complaint of harassment based upon an honest perception of the events or for cooperating in the investigation of a complaint is strictly prohibited.

## **Grievance Procedure**

**Address your volunteer manager-** If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice, or action by Fort Bend Women's Center is unjust, you should tell your volunteer coordinator about it and discuss the matter confidentially and in private with him or her. If for some reason your volunteer coordinator fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step.

**Meet with the Chief External Affairs Officer-** Your volunteer manager's immediate supervisor, the agency CEO, will review the grievance and ask you to meet. At this meeting, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do. In most cases, the matter will usually be resolved at this stage.

**Meet with the board-** Following the meeting with our CEO, if you are still displeased with the decision rendered, you should bring the problem directly to our Board. The problem will

be discussed with all concerned and a final decision will be made. The Board's decision will be binding on all. The sole purpose of this Feedback Procedure is to give each volunteer and Fort Bend Women's Center a chance to clear up any problem, complaint, friction, or grievance.

## **Termination and Dismissal**

Because Fort Bend Women's Center is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. In general, failure to adhere to policies of Fort Bend Women's Center is cause for immediate release.

### **1. Resignation**

While we hope both you and the Fort Bend Women's Center will mutually benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize that it may become necessary for you to leave your job with the Fort Bend Women's Center. If you anticipate having to resign your position with Fort Bend Women's Center, you are expected to notify your Volunteer Coordinator in writing as far in advance as possible and make arrangements for an exit interview.

Volunteers who resign in good standing may be welcomed back for future volunteer opportunities. The organization encourages maintaining positive relationships with former volunteers.

### **2. Exit Interviews**

In instances where a volunteer voluntarily leaves, Fort Bend Women's Center would like to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions the volunteer may have about Fort Bend Women's Center. If you decide to leave, you will be asked to grant us the privilege of an exit interview. We hope that the interview will help us part friends, as well as provide insight into possible improvements. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that Fort Bend Women's Center will provide to another agency.

### **3. Feedback**

An efficient, successful operation and satisfied volunteers go hand in hand. Volunteer grievances are of concern to Fort Bend Women's Center, regardless of whether the problems are large or small. In order to provide for prompt and efficient evaluation of, and response to, grievances, Fort Bend Women's Center has established a Feedback Procedure for all volunteers. It will always be Fort Bend Women's Center's endeavor to give full

consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting grievances.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

There are a variety of opportunities to volunteer your time and skills at FBWC. Over 60% of our Life and Wellness programs are taught by volunteers. Volunteers teach our classes, mentor program participants, and help with day-to-day operations. After qualifying for any of the opportunities available, you will receive a full role description form with all the information needed to succeed.

FBWC is in constant change, so are the needs for volunteers. This is a list of the main opportunities available during the year, but we are not limited to it.

### **1. Community Outreach Ambassador**

Ambassadors help provide awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and intervention work when attending community fairs and events or speaking engagements. Must be available on weeknights and weekends.

### **2. Hair Stylist/Barber**

Provide haircutting, styling and basic grooming services to clients at Fort Bend Women's Center on a volunteer basis.

### **3. Makeup Artist**

Provide makeup tutorials, application guidance, and pampering services to clients at Fort Bend Women's on a volunteer basis.

### **4. Sexual Assault Hospital Accompaniment Response Team (HART) Volunteer**

Respond to requests for sexual assault hospital accompaniment that come in to the hotline from partnering hospitals

### **5. Housing Client Engagement Volunteer**

Conduct New Client Intakes and/or Housing Intakes with incoming housing clients

### **6. Court Accompaniment Advocate**

Provide court accompaniment for clients engaged in divorce, custody, protective order cases as well as criminal prosecution cases against their abuser.

### **7. Client Group/Class Facilitator With Staff Facilitation Assistance**

Facilitate groups or classes for client healing/positivity/self-improvement

Examples of groups: coping/healing groups, self-esteem groups, substance abuse recovery groups, parenting groups, etc.

Examples of classes: Painting/art, Yoga, Zumba, budgeting, interview skills, resume writing, GED prep classes, vision board making etc.

### **8. Client Group/Class Facilitator Without Staff Facilitation Assistance**

Facilitate groups or classes for healing/positivity/self-improvement

Examples of groups: coping/healing groups, self-esteem groups, substance abuse recovery groups, parenting groups, etc.

Examples of classes: Painting/art, Yoga, Zumba, budgeting, interview skills, resume writing, GED prep classes, vision board making etc.

### **9. Housing Resource Researcher & Data Integrity Volunteer**

Research resources in Fort Bend and surrounding areas to assist Housing staff and clients with help finding housing. This includes, but is not limited to:

Researching new properties in the Greater Houston Area for possible units for Rapid Rehousing clients. Calling landlords to inquire about working with our housing program. Making calls to check for available units in already established properties

### **10. Life Skills & Wellness Resource Researcher**

Research resources in Fort Bend and surrounding areas to assist Life Skills & Wellness clients with employment and/or adult education needs. This includes, but is not limited to: laptops for low income families, scholarship search, free GED or Adult Basic Ed courses, low cost vocational training, employment opportunities for clients without SSN, free ESL classes.

### **11. Residential Organization & Beautification Volunteer**

Beautification of the shelter, i.e. gardening, painting walls/fence posts, drawing, painting a mural, etc. Organizing the donation/clothes closet, organizing the shelter storage areas, organizing the front office and supplies

### **12. Child-Services Mentor**

Help a child with homework, play games, be a friend and a good role model.

### **13. Special Initiatives Coordinator(s)**

Help plan and execute activities for clients.

### **14. Resource Coordinator(s)**

Be the gatekeeper for receiving donations and putting them away in an organized fashion. Keep all supply rooms organized and distribute as needed.

### **15. Administrative and Office Support**

Use your administrative and communication skills while helping with general office tasks, answering inquiries, and meeting guests. Must be comfortable with computers and have an upbeat attitude.

### **16. Special Events**

We hold a variety of special events throughout the year. These include fundraisers, picnics, graduations, our Holiday Craft Party, appreciation dinners and our annual Gala. Volunteer opportunities include serving on planning committees, helping with day of event tasks and more. Dates and times vary.

### **17. Volunteer Grant Writer**

Research and identify grant funding opportunities and grant funding needs; -federal, state and private. Assist in tracking grants, operates office equipment such as printers, personal computers, etc.; communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

### **18. Silent Auction Ambassador**

Research and identify potential donors, businesses, and individuals who could contribute items, packages or experiences for the silent auction. Reach out to potential donors through phone calls, emails and in-person visits to solicit donations. Maintain organized records of all donor communications, including contact information, donation details, and follow-up actions. Coordinate the collection and delivery of donated items, ensuring they are received in a timely manner and in accordance with any special guidelines.

## **Student Volunteers**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines and expectations for student volunteers involved in our organization. This policy ensures a structured, respectful, and productive environment for all participants.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible to volunteer at FBWC students must be currently enrolled in a recognized educational institution and must be at least 8 years old. Volunteers under 15 years old must be accompanied by a parent during ALL their volunteering time and will have role restrictions for safety matters. No exceptions.

All volunteers must submit a completed application and provide necessary documentation as requested. Interested students should complete the volunteer application form available on our website and attend orientation.

### **Cellphone Usage**

Student volunteers are expected to use their cellphones in a manner that does not interfere with their responsibilities, disrupt the work environment, or negatively impact the experience of others. Volunteers should avoid engaging in personal calls, texting, or using social media during volunteer hours unless it is part of their assigned duties. Be mindful of your surroundings and avoid loud conversations or behavior that could disturb others.

### **Breaks and Rest Periods**

Student volunteers are allowed to take breaks during their shifts to rest and recharge. However, excessive or disruptive break usage can impact the efficiency and effectiveness of volunteer operations. Volunteers are entitled to take breaks of 15 minutes per every 2-hour shift. The specific timing of breaks should be coordinated with the volunteer supervisor. Excessive breaks or breaks that extend beyond the allotted time are not permitted and won't count for your volunteer hours credits.

### **Volunteer Hour Credits**

Volunteers must accurately log the actual hours worked. Falsifying hours or misreporting time is a serious violation of this policy. Students must use the designated time tracking system on our website to record their hours. All entries must be completed in a timely manner and reflect the actual time worked.

Hours should be logged and submitted within 24 hours of completing a shift or at the end of each week and the volunteer coordinator will review and verify logged hours periodically. Any discrepancies or issues will be addressed with the volunteer.

Volunteers in need to report hours for another organization using an external time tracking system (Schoollinks, x2VOL, etc.) must log their hours worked in our system first, in order to get verified. If we can verify your hours in our system, it won't get approved.

### **Work Performance**

Volunteers are expected to perform their assigned tasks diligently and to the best of their ability. Work should meet the standards set by the organization. Student volunteers should remain focused on their tasks during their scheduled hours and avoid distractions that may impact their performance.

Volunteers must act with integrity in all aspects of their role, including being honest about their work accomplishments and the time spent on tasks. Volunteers should show respect for the FBWC's resources, staff, and fellow volunteers, maintaining a positive and professional attitude. All students should handle FBWC property, equipment, and materials responsibly and return them in good condition.

### **Dress Code**

All volunteers must adhere to our dress code policy. If a uniform is provided or required, volunteers must wear it according to the guidelines provided. Uniforms should be worn in a clean and presentable manner.

Supervisors and staff should observe and address any dress code inconsistencies in a respectful and non-confrontational manner. If a volunteer is found to be in violation of the dress code policy, they will receive a verbal reminder about the dress code expectations and be given the opportunity to correct the issue. If dress code violations persist despite previous warnings, further actions may be taken.

If a volunteer is observed not complying with the guidelines, they will receive a verbal reminder of the policy. Continued non-compliance may result in further action, including a formal warning or possible termination from the volunteer program. We will inform the respective educational institution about their performance and won't be allowed to volunteer again except with parental supervision.



## **Internships**

Interns are valuable contributors to our team, and we are committed to foster a positive and professional internship experience while ensuring alignment with organizational goals and legal requirements.

FBWC have Internship opportunities in the areas of Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), Counseling and therapy groups, Nonresident and Shelter, Play therapy, Social Work, Case Management, Licensed Social Work (LSW) Parent Aid, Child Development, Master of Social Work (MSW).

Interns must complete the FBWC Office Attorney General certified training (OAG) at the start of the internship to work with clients alone. Typically, OAG is scheduled to coincide with the start of internships. If OAG is just before the internship starts, we would let the Intern know about it so they can sign up for it.

**Note:** Master of Social Work, HR, or Finance degrees are accepted on a case-by-case basis, depending on the availability of a supervisor.

### **General onboarding process:**

- Complete an intern application on our website.
- Interview for internship.
- If accepted, we ask for proof of liability insurance and all school documents to be sent to the site supervisor for review. The site supervisor will complete any paperwork required by the school.
- Sends a headshot picture for the proper ID badge.
- If the site supervisor has anything extra for the intern to complete before starting, they will share it directly with the intern.
- Complete OAG.
- Attend orientation.
- At orientation, Intern will receive an ID badges and keys.
- We will review the expectations of the internship, policies, and procedures, and get to know one another.
- Once all the above is complete, interns will start officially seeing clients or the task they are assigned to do.
- Interns complete supervision once a week with the site supervisor.

LWS Parent Aid program interns must commit for a minimum of 7 months or willing to volunteer after graduation to finish up the program with the client. They will also host groups for LWS program.

### **Master of Social Work Intern Procedures**

All prospective MSW interns must:

- Complete an MSW internship application on-line at fbwc.org
- Interview with the MSW site supervisor
- Submit to a background check
- Provide a minimum of one million dollars of liability insurance
- Provide auto insurance coverage to HR if transporting clients

Once accepted the student will:

- Submit total hours of the internship block
- Commit to weekly, consistent, one hour supervision meetings
- Review with site supervisor the educational plan covering the 9 competences
- Attend required OAG training (30 hours + 10 hours of self-study)
- Submit a weekly time log
- Notify site supervisor of absences

The Site Supervisor will:

- Assign an on-boarding buddy
- Ensure student has an assigned intern email and {8x8 – (if applicable)}
- Reach out to other departments to accommodate the student's after-hours schedule (e.g., shelter, weekend activities, etc....)
- Review and sign off on weekly time logs
- Review and sign Education Plans

The student is encouraged to:

- Ask questions
- Attend weekly Traction Department Meetings
- Accompany case managers on home visits and case management sessions
- Attend roundtable interventions
- Observe other departments for specific trainings (e.g., hotline, intake, etc....)
- Complete other assigned tasks

### **Social Work Interns Procedures**

- Complete an Intern/Volunteer Application online
- Complete the next OAG Training including self-studies & on the job training
- Be familiar with professional ethics
- Student professional liability insurance issued by the school

- Requirements from FBWC, such as background check and certificate of completion
- Photo for ID Name Badge

### **Child Development Interns Procedures**

- Complete an Intern/Volunteer Application online
- Must email site supervisor (FBWC) their school supervisor's contact information and requirements of the school program before being accepted as a student intern with the center.
- Complete the next Direct Services Training including self-studies & on the job training
- Attend New Intern Orientation (covers paperwork and documentation)
- Student professional liability insurance and proof of coverage required.
- Be familiar with professional ethics.
- Requirements from FBWC, such as background check and certificate of completion
- Photo for ID Name Badge

### **Counseling Interns Procedures**

- Complete an Intern/Volunteer Application online.
- Virtual or in-person interview with Site Supervisor

After receiving confirmation from the Counseling Supervisor:

- New Intern Orientation (this covers paperwork and therapy documentation)
- Purchase and read "Treating PTSD in Battered Women," by Edward Kubany & Tyler Ralston before seeing clients.

### **Play Therapy Interns – “TraumaPlay Certification Program”**

- Student professional liability insurance and proof of coverage required.
- Be familiar with professional ethics.
- Background check by FBWC
- Photo for ID Name Badge

### **Group Volunteers and Organizations**

FBWC Welcome all school classes, corporate teams, community organizations, or other formal or informal groups. Group volunteers contribute collectively to our mission and programs.

Groups interested in volunteering should submit a proposal detailing the group's size, preferred dates, and type of volunteer work they wish to undertake. Proposals will be reviewed, and the group will be notified of approval and any specific requirements or

arrangements needed. Each group should have a designated leader or point of contact who will coordinate with our volunteer coordinator.

Group leaders and members will receive the specific tasks to be performed, and any safety protocols or requirements. All logistical arrangements, including dates, times, and specific tasks, should be finalized well in advance to ensure smooth operation. Regular updates will be provided to the group leader to ensure that they are informed of any changes or additional information.

Leaders must ensure that all group members comply with the FBWC's dress code, safety guidelines, and conduct expectations. Group members should actively participate in the assigned tasks and work collaboratively with other volunteers and staff. They are expected to adhere to our code of conduct, including professionalism, respect, and responsibility.

After the volunteer activity, feedback will be required from the group leader and members to evaluate the experience and gather suggestions for improvement. Groups will receive acknowledgment for their contributions, which may include certificates, letters of appreciation, social media exposure, or other forms of recognition.

FBWC focus on the organization's mission without promoting any specific religious views to provide services to an inclusive community. All activities should focus on FBWC's mission and objectives without incorporating religious content, practices, or endorsements. Activities should be designed to be inclusive and welcoming to individuals of all religious backgrounds or none.

Student group volunteer are required to have a chaperone for every five students participating, and the group may not exceed of 25 members.

## **Community Service and Probation Volunteers**

FBWC accept volunteers with court mandated hours apart from any charge related to assault or theft. All community service hours will be completed at Thriftwise Resale stores.

### **Requirements:**

- Must have proper ID.
- Must have proper legal documents telling their charge and how many hours they need to perform.
- Must follow the policy & procedure sheet.

### **Probation:**

- Must have proper ID and probation card.
- Must have signed policy & procedure sheet from the/their probation officer.
- Must follow the policy & procedure sheet.
- **We do not sign any paperwork of theirs.** We only sign off on our documents that are made when they sign up.
- No copies, or photos of the documents are allowed for their records unless they complete all their probation hours.

EXAMPLE: Required Community Service Approval Document from Parole Officers

### **Community Service & Probation Agreement**

1. **ID:** You must bring your Probation ID card **every time** you come in. You will not be allowed to sign in without it.

2. **Location & Hours:** All Community Service hours must be completed at the **same** ThriftWise location – you cannot work at multiple locations and must work **at least 4 hours** at a time. The hours are Monday – Saturday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm. Sunday 12:00 pm -5:00 p.m.

**Richmond:** 501 Highway 90A East, Richmond, TX 77406 (281)-344-5777

**Stafford:** 13645 Murphy Rd, Stafford, TX 77477 (281)-344-5777

3. **Signing in and out:** Remember to have an employee **sign you in and out each time**. You will not be credited for hours worked if you do not sign in. You must notify the store manager if you leave the store and must be signed out. The number of hours worked will be emailed to the Fort Bend County Community Supervision & Corrections Department at the end of each day. Please contact your probation officer for any questions about these hours.

4. **Breaks:** Ask the manager before you take a break. You must sign out if you want to take a break lasting over 10 minutes. Only one person at a time can take a break. Smoking is not allowed on the premises.

5. **Acceptable Dress:** If you are not dressed according to this agreement, you will not be allowed to sign in. Long pants only. No shorts, midriff tops, or sleeveless shirts. No offensive language or advertisements for tobacco or alcohol products on clothing. All clothing should be in good condition and clean with no holes or rips: and no excessive fading or ragged bottoms.

a. **Shoes:** All personnel must wear closed-toe and closed-back shoes for safety: no house slippers, slides, sandals, Crocs, or open-toed/ open-back shoes.

b. **Hair, Makeup & Nails:** Hair & makeup should be proper for a professional retail work environment.

6. **Personal belongings:** Please do not bring personal items inside the store. ThriftWise will not be responsible for your personal belongings. Lockers might be available upon request.

7. **Electronic devices:** Use of cell phones, headphones, or iPods at any time while you are signed in is **prohibited**. – No Exceptions.

8. **Job Duties:** You will be assigned a job duty after signing in. Only leave your assigned area if instructed by an employee. If your job duty is completed, please ask an employee for another task.

Job duties may include cleaning restrooms, unloading donations, picking up trash, sweeping & mopping, hanging & recycling clothing, bringing in carts from the parking lot, and other duties as needed.

**9. Visitors & Behavior:** Please arrange childcare before coming to the store. No visitors allowed. Please treat all customers, employees, donors, and volunteers with respect. Theft, misconduct, profanity, or abusive language will not be tolerated.

**10. Merchandise:**

a. Volunteers cannot price or change prices on any merchandise. Do not move items from the back room to the sales floor for customers unless instructed by an employee.

b. Unprocessed donations in the receiving room are not eligible for purchase. All purchases must be made after you have signed out, and a manager must process the purchase.

**11. Release of Liability Waiver:** I release FBWC and Resale Store from all liability pertaining to accidents, injuries, or complications resulting from activities. I understand FBWC is not responsible for medical costs associated with an accident or injury, and my personal medical Insurance would need to be used for expenses. I authorize the FBWC or other emergency vehicles to transport me to the nearest hospital in case of injury. I authorize the hospital to administer the necessary care.

**Initial:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My initials above and my signature below constitute my understanding and acceptance of these policies. I have read and understand the conditions by which community service will be performed at ThriftWise. If I do not follow any of the guidelines in this Community Service Agreement, I will be signed out and not allowed to complete my remaining community service hours at any ThriftWise locations.**

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Fort Bend County Officer Signature	ThriftWise Employee Signature	

### **Volunteer Perks Program**

We love our volunteers! They shine hope for survivors! FBWC values the hard work and dedication of our volunteers providing volunteer perks, ensuring that all volunteers are recognized fairly and in alignment with the organization's resources and goals.

Volunteers who have completed a minimum number of service hours, as determined by this policy, are eligible for perks. Some perks may be specific to certain programs or roles, and

eligibility requirements may vary accordingly. All volunteer hours need to be logged in our system to prove eligibility.

### **1. Official Badge**

Receive your official Fort Bend Women's Center volunteer ID badge after 12 hours have been logged on our website.

### **2. 20x20 Club**

Get 20% off on all Thriftwise purchases by volunteering at least 20 hours. To continue receiving the discount, you must volunteer at least 20 hours each quarter.

### **3. Official T-shirt**

Receive your official FBWC volunteer T-shirt after volunteering 40 hours.

### **4. 100 Club**

Volunteers with over 100 hours within a year (Dec-Nov) will receive a \$100 Gift Card to be used at any Thriftwise Resale location.

### **5. Coffee & Donuts**

Monthly networking opportunity to meet other volunteers and enjoy some coffee and donuts.

### **6. Bingo Bash**

Enjoy a Bingo Night full of appreciation, food, drinks, and prizes.

### **7. Volunteer Mix & Mingle**

Holiday party to recognize all volunteers and projects achieved during the year.

### **Additional volunteer perks include:**

- Receiving the volunteer newsletter every other month
- A special birthday note from FBWC on your birthday month and social media exposure.
- Access to additional trainings offered by the Fort Bend Women's Center.
- Awards for your contributions and milestones.
- Opportunity to attend special events.
- Other special volunteer events.
- Receive branded merchandise as a token of appreciation.

**Volunteer Agreement**

Fort Bend Women’s Center believes in the inherent ability of every individual to make positive changes in their life and to learn to communicate in truthful, respectful ways. Fort Bend Women’s Center strives to create a nurturing space where ALL survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault can share, grow, and heal.

In pursuit of this goal, volunteers are expected to keep all information regarding the clients in our program confidential and to treat everyone with respect. Failure to comply with these policies may result in dismissal from the volunteer program and or civil criminal prosecution in accordance with applicable statutes.

By signing this form,

I acknowledge that I been given a copy of FBWC Volunteer Handbook.

I understand that it summarizes Fort Bend Women’s Center’s volunteer guidelines and expectations of me as a volunteer.

I understand that volunteering with Fort Bend Women’s Center is not for specified term and is at the mutual consent of Fort Bend Women’s Center and myself.

I agree to abide by the Policies and Procedures laid out in the Volunteer Handbook.

I will be prompt and responsive.

I agree to conduct myself in a professional manner, showing respect and courtesy to staff, other volunteers, and individuals served by the organization.

I will comply with the organization’s code of conduct, dress code, and other policies.

I agree to maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive information and to use it only for the purposes of my volunteer role.

I consent to any background checks or screenings that may be required for my role.

I understand that FBWC reserves the right to terminate my volunteer service if I fail to meet the expectations outlined in this agreement or if my conduct is deemed inappropriate.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this Volunteer Agreement and agree to adhere to them.

I understand that this agreement does not constitute an employment relationship and that my volunteer service is provided without compensation.

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Giving your time and talent can be so fulfilling and make a big difference in survivors’ lives. We appreciate all our volunteers who help improve our survivors’ quality of life by volunteering to help by assisting with client needs or working in one of our Thriftwise Resale Stores. *Every hour counts towards the mission!*