



WINhouse

Volunteer Handbook

commmunity@winhouse.org



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Dear Volunteers,

Welcome aboard!

We are so pleased you have made the decision and commitment to join our dynamic team! It was, after all, a *group of dedicated* volunteers who started our organization in 1968. Volunteers continue to play an integral role at WIN House, investing their time, energy, and skills to assist us in our mission to further non-violent relationships and environments for women and non-binary individuals with or without children.

WIN House operates three shelters throughout the city, providing a wide range of programs and services to our residents. These programs include counselling services, onsite nursing care, a meal program, WIN School, cultural programming, crisis intervention, safety planning, child minding, advocacy, and so much more. Without volunteer support, important components of our operations could not be achieved. Volunteers sort donations, attend community events, provide administrative support, represent WIN House, help organize special events and much more!

This Volunteer Handbook was developed to provide you with important details of WIN House philosophies, policies, and expectations. Please read the Volunteer Handbook thoroughly and keep it in a safe place for your future reference. Any questions or concerns you may have should be directed to the Community Engagement Coordinator.

We are pleased with your decision to become a member of the WIN House team and wish you success and satisfaction in your volunteer journey. We are confident your time with WIN House will be both personally and professionally rewarding.

We look forward to having you on the team!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lennie A".

Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heidi Besmijen".

Board Chair

About WIN House

Our Mission:

WIN House exists to further non-violent relationships and environments for women and non-binary individuals with or without children.

Our Vision:

Women, non-binary individuals, and children are safe and free from abuse in their environments and relationships.

Our Values:

WIN House is people focused and forward-thinking, without exception.

Our History:

In 1968, WIN House began, led by Daisy Wilson, as a group of women bringing together resources to support women without a safe place to go. Five years later, they became a registered charity.

In 1978, WIN I was the first shelter opened in Edmonton. Having a permanent building to operate out of allowed WIN House to provide other services such as meals, resources, and referrals to other programming in the city.

As the number of women fleeing violence increased, WIN House expanded. In 1982, WIN II opened in Edmonton. WIN II was the first purpose-built shelter for women and their children in Canada. As WIN I and WIN II operated as emergency shelters where women could stay for up to thirty days, WIN House noticed a gap. In 2010, WIN III was opened in Edmonton. This shelter focuses on providing support to women with precarious immigration status, and those fleeing human trafficking. WIN III is classified as a second-stage shelter in which women and families can stay for up to three years while they work towards gaining independence.

In 2021, WIN House began operating using a low-barrier model. This means we are trauma-informed, and work to eliminate barriers that people may face in accessing shelter through providing proactive and innovative programming. WIN House accepts all women and non-binary individuals fleeing violence, with or without children. On site, shelter staff provide programs and services including education on gender-based violence, safety planning, meals, crisis intervention, and supportive listening.

Now, in 2023, WIN House is celebrating fifty-five years of supporting those fleeing violence in our community and working towards non-violent relationships and environments.

WIN House Services

Our Shelters

Emergency Shelters: Our two Emergency Shelters provide a crisis response to those who need a place to stay. Residents can stay up to 30 days. Each shelter has a play area for children, TV room, laundry facilities, and 24-7 access to trained Crisis Intervention Workers.

WIN I

WIN II

Second-Stage Shelter: Our one Second-Stage Shelter provides long-term support to those who have precarious immigration status or those who are survivors of sex trafficking. Residents can stay up to 2 years. With the support of Crisis Intervention Workers, it is designed to be a home. This shelter provides kitchen space, a living area, and laundry facilities.

WIN III

Our Programs

Adopt-A-Family: Annually, generous donors choose a family profile from our website to help support over the holiday season. WIN House provides them with a list of essential items and holiday gifts which are utilized in shelter throughout the year.

Amazon "A Wish List": Donors can shop WIN Houses' Amazon Wish List for the necessities required by families as they leave shelter. This list is constantly updated to reflect our current needs.

Counselling Services: In partnership with **YWCA**, WIN House provides free drop-in counselling on-site for individual support. There is an additional free drop-in Domestic Violence support group. Residents can further utilize these services when they leave shelter at little to no cost.

Cultural Activities: Through a variety of services within the community, WIN House provides Indigenous cultural supports to all residents.

Gardening Program: Each summer, WIN House plants gardens at each shelter. These gardens aim to make shelters feel more like a home while providing fresh fruit and vegetables to residents.

Household Package Program: Upon leaving the shelter, residents can request a package filled with household necessities consisting of donated new items such as small appliances, towels, and dishware.

Meal Program: To ensure each resident is eating nutritious and fulfilling food, WIN House employs a chef who prepares 3 meals a day plus snacks at no cost to the residents.

Nursing Care: In partnership with **Street Works**, WIN House offers access to immediate and follow-up medical intervention through an on-site registered nurse. Our nursing care further provides residents with resources and health education.

Personal Items: Upon arrival, residents are given access to diapers, clothing, toiletries, linen, towels, and more. These items are provided at no cost.

Safety Planning: Crisis Intervention Workers help those seeking advice or staying in shelter to create safety plans that are custom to each unique situation. This involves a practical plan to stay safe for those still in a violent environment, those planning to leave, as well as for those who have already left violence.

Transportation: WIN House provides free transportation within the Edmonton area from crisis to shelter. We also provide transport to emergency medical services.

WIN School: For children kindergarten to grade nine age, an Edmonton Public School provides a classroom for WIN students, offering consistency, confidentiality, and a designated teacher to work with them on their level.

24/7 Helpline: WIN House operates a 24-hour Helpline to support individuals fleeing violence or seeking advice. At any time, any caller can speak to a trained Crisis Intervention Worker at (780) 479-0058.

Our Partners

Alberta SPCA: One barrier preventing many individuals from fleeing violence is what will happen to their pets. During their stay in shelter, WIN House residents can have their pets cared for through the Pet Safekeeping Program designed by the SPCA.

Central Sewing Machines: Since 1997, Central Sewing Machines has hosted the Central Sewing Volunteers (CSV) every week. Over the last 25 years, CSV have made thousands of quilts, pillowcases, clothing, baby items, Christmas stockings, and more for WIN House to give to the individuals and families we serve.

Edmonton Public Library (EPL): Through the Abbotsfield library, WIN House is able to provide library resources and library programming directly in shelter for residents.

Goodwill: When you drop off your donations at Goodwill and say they are for WIN House, they are turned into gift vouchers. Residents are then able to use these vouchers to shop independently for what they need.

Santa's Anonymous: Our partnership with Santa's Anonymous means that no child living in shelter goes without a new toy at Christmas or for their birthday. All toy donations are routed to Santa's Anonymous and upon our request, Santa's Anonymous provides us with new toys.

Rohit Group of Companies: Each year, Rohit donates hundreds of baskets filled with self-care and comfort items through their annual Baskets of Hope campaign. These baskets are received by every adult individual entering WIN House.

Unbridled Equines: Made possible through our partnership with Unbridled Equines, the Equine Program gives residents the opportunity to learn life and leadership skills through a healing connection with animals.

*We would also like to thank our partners **YWCA** and **Bent Arrow** as seen above in "Our Programs" (6)



Volunteer Roles

Community Event Volunteer

This role will include assisting the WIN House fundraising team at community-based events and initiatives, as well as third-party fundraisers. Event Volunteers will help with set up and take down at events and will represent WIN House in the community. Their main goal is to help raise public awareness about WIN House programs, services, and general awareness about non-violent relationships and environments for women and non-binary individuals with or without children. The location of events will vary throughout the city of Edmonton and may or may not be wheelchair accessible. Our Community Event Volunteers are encouraged to take lots of pictures for social media purposes.

In-Kind Donation Support Volunteer

Our In-Kind Donation Support Volunteers assist in organizing, sorting, and managing incoming and outgoing donations. The main work site is the WIN House Business Office (3825 - 118 Avenue NW). This role is non-wheelchair accessible.

Administration & Office Volunteer

This role will provide office and administrative support to the WIN House fundraising team through answering phone calls, emails, managing documents, and other duties as assigned. The main work site is the WIN House Business Office (3825 - 118 Avenue NW). This role is wheelchair accessible.

Garden Program Volunteer

Under the direction of the Shelter Operations Team, volunteers will provide support, care, and maintenance of the *WIN House Garden Program* through planting, weeding, harvesting, and other duties as assigned. Garden Program Volunteers will work at shelters. This role is wheelchair accessible.

Shelter Support Volunteer

Under the supervision of the Shelter Operations Team, volunteers will assist in shelter. This may include leading activities, assisting with seasonal projects, and helping the team with various tasks. Shelter Support Volunteers will work at shelters. This role may or may not be wheelchair accessible.

What You Can Expect

Accessibility and Inclusivity

WIN House promotes an inclusive environment free of discrimination and harassment. As such, volunteers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Where possible, WIN House will provide required accommodations for volunteers.

Breaks

Each volunteer shift of three hours or longer will include at least one fifteen-minute break. Some shifts provide a meal or light snack, should there be food provided this will be communicated prior.

Communication

Potential volunteer shifts will be communicated mainly via the monthly newsletter or through personal emails from the Development Team.

Training and Orientation

Orientation and training are provided to ensure volunteers understand their role, our standard of expectations, and our policies relating to volunteers and residents. Volunteers must respect the boundaries of their duties. Any concerns and comments are to be directed to the Community Engagement Specialist. Each volunteer is required to complete a mandatory orientation prior to their first shift. Additionally, you must complete training where necessary based on the volunteer role.

Photo and Media Release

As per the "Photo and Media Consent Form," (See Appendix 2) WIN House will respect each volunteer's personal choice to have media containing their image released. Images may be used on, but not limited to, the WIN House website, social media, or in written publications to promote the volunteer program.

Volunteer Recognition

WIN House appreciates the commitment of every one of our volunteers and works to recognize their contribution to the organization. For those in need of volunteer hours, we can sign off on completed hours; please see the "Volunteer Hours Tracker" (See Appendix 1) to ensure proper tracking. Additionally, we may provide ourselves as a volunteer reference. Please communicate your needs with the Community Engagement Specialist.

Volunteer Policies

Attendance

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to arrive on time for scheduled shifts. If you are unable to attend or will be late, please notify the Community Engagement Specialist prior to your scheduled shift.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

WIN House is committed to providing respectful, secure, and supportive volunteer environments to ensure the safety and well-being of all volunteers. WIN House does not tolerate or condone any harassment or violent actions or behaviors directed towards any WIN House employee, student, volunteer, or representative. This includes but is not limited to verbal or physical abuse; bullying; ridicule; threats; malicious gossip or rumors; intimidation; offensive signs or images; derogatory remarks, jokes, or innuendos; or any unwanted behavior of a sexual nature. Volunteers found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to immediate dismissal. No element of this policy limits a person's right to report an incident of violence or harassment to the police or other law enforcement agencies.

Confidentiality

All volunteers must be advised of and acknowledge the WIN House Oath of Confidentiality agreement (See Appendix 4). As a volunteer, you may become privy to confidential information including, but not limited to the address and location of the shelters; budget and planning information; or personal and confidential information regarding the identity and circumstances of people who come to WIN for both residential and nonresidential support. Volunteers may not disclose any confidential or personal information to any individual or the public. Doing so may result in the immediate dismissal of a volunteer. If at any time you have questions regarding what is confidential, please speak to your Volunteer Supervisor.

Conflict of Interest

A volunteer may not put their beneficial interests above the interests of the organization. Importantly, volunteers may not use their involvement with WIN House to interfere with anyone's right to use the services provided by WIN House. You must declare a conflict of interest or suspicion of one to the Community Engagement Specialist prior to your involvement with WIN House.

Dismissal and Resignation Policy

Volunteers are free to resign from WIN House at any time. We ask that you please notify us by email that you are no longer interested in volunteering so that we may remove you from upcoming communications.

Dismissal of a volunteer will occur only as a last resort and will generally take place following progressive disciplinary actions, where possible. Grounds for volunteer dismissal may include but are not limited to missing more than one volunteer shift without notice; illegal, violent or unsafe acts; failure to abide by WIN House policies and procedures; gross misconduct; theft of property, monetary, or in-kind donations, equipment or materials; the sharing of confidential or personal information; or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or smoking while performing volunteer duties. Immediate dismissal of a volunteer may occur in extreme cases. Should dismissal be necessary, the Community Engagement Specialist will inform the volunteer immediately.

Dress Code

Most volunteer shifts follow a casual dress code, and you are encouraged to wear what you feel comfortable in. However, when volunteering in the community please remember you are acting as a representative of WIN House. As such, we ask that you maintain proper grooming and dress standards. Should you need to wear specific attire, you will be notified prior to your shift.

Grievance Procedures

WIN House recognizes that each volunteer has the right to raise grievances about any matter related to their volunteer work. We ask that any problems, criticisms, or suggestions go directly to the Community Engagement Specialist. If the volunteer does not feel comfortable speaking with the Community Engagement Specialist or the complaint is directly about the Community Engagement Specialist, they may go to the Director of Development or Executive Director.

Privacy and Personal Information Policy

The collection of volunteers' personal information including name, address, phone number, emergency contact, and email address is used only for contact purposes or to forward relevant information. We ask that you update this information as required. To ensure the security of your personal information, WIN House shreds all paper records when no longer needed; does not share your email address with outside parties; protects electronic records by limited access, firewalls, and passwords; and will never disclose your personal information without your consent.

Use of Non-Prescription Substances (Legal or Illegal)

Volunteers are expected to come fit for work. The use of alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs prior to or during a shift is strictly prohibited. Smoking, vaping, e-cigarettes, and the use of tobacco while on duty are prohibited. Volunteers must use designated smoking areas if smoking while on break.

Volunteer and Resident Relations

As per the "Volunteer Pledge" (See Appendix 3), volunteers shall not become involved in the personal affairs of residents and their families including legal, financial, or property matters; engage in any faith practices; witness or sign legal documents or forms on behalf of the residents or their families; lend money to or accept loans from residents, family members or anyone associated with the resident (this includes compensation, rewards, or gifts for their volunteer service); volunteers are required to inform WIN House staff of any financial proposals, rewards or gifts offered to them.

Volunteer Charter of Rights

WIN House recognizes that each volunteer plays an integral role in achieving our mandate. As such, we commit to delivering the appropriate infrastructure and resources to provide our volunteers with a meaningful experience. We recognize that volunteers have rights. As such, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment through open communication, comprehensive training and supervision, and proper screening of each volunteer opportunity. Volunteers will be welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the team.

FAQ

1. Do I need to bring anything with me to my volunteer shifts?

To ensure you and your Volunteer Supervisor can communicate, please bring your cell phone. Should you need anything else, a member of the WIN House team will reach out in advance of the shift.

2. How is WIN House funded?

Edmonton Women's Shelter Ltd. is mainly funded by government and community grants, donations, and funds raised through events.

3. Why do women only stay in the emergency shelters for 30 days?

30 days is a guideline which is standard across women's shelters. As emergency shelters, WIN 1 and WIN 2 are utilized for those in immediate need. Second stage shelters and transitional shelters are designed for longer stays.

4. What is Edmonton Women's Shelter Ltd?

Edmonton Women's Shelter Ltd. is commonly known as WIN House (Women In Need). It owns and operates three shelters in Edmonton, with a capacity for 60 persons between two emergency shelters as well as 11 individuals at our second-stage shelter.

5. Where are the shelters located?

Shelter locations are confidential to facilitate resident privacy and security.

6. Who can stay at WIN House?

Those identifying as women or non-binary with or without children fleeing violence.

7. Why aren't men accepted in the shelters?

Although the experience of violence is not one that is limited to women and non-binary individuals, men are less likely to experience the most severe forms of violence. Women are more likely to experience higher rates of repeated victimization and higher rates of serious injury (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2023). As a result, WIN House looks to best address the needs of women and non-binary individuals.

8. Is there a minimum age for volunteers?

Volunteers must be 18 years of age to volunteer alone. Volunteers aged 12-18 may volunteer if accompanied by an adult. Please reach out to community@winhouse.org if you have questions or concerns about this.

9. Does WIN House accept the donation of used items?

As per our Gift Acceptancy Policy, WIN House is unable to accept the donation of used items. Should a donor ask to donate used clothes, products, or household items, please direct them to donate their used items to Goodwill in support of WIN House.

10. Are there other ways I can support WIN House?

Yes! Here are a few other ways you can help:

1. [Host a fundraiser](#)
2. [Donate Online](#)
3. [Goodwill Partnership](#): Donate USED clothing/items in support of WIN House directly to Goodwill and specify your donation is in support of WIN House.
4. [Household Packages](#): Donate NEW essentials



Thank you for choosing to volunteer with WIN House.

Community Engagement Specialist

winhouse.org/volunteer

community@winhouse.org

Office Phone: 780-471-6709

Mailing Address: PO Box 20088 RPO Beverly, Edmonton AB T5W 5E6

Edmonton Women's Shelter Ltd., "WIN House"
Charitable Registration No.: 107283301 RR 0001

Appendix #2: Photo/Video/Media Consent Form

Photo/Video/Media Consent Form

Consent for WIN House to use Photographic and/or Video Recordings.

I authorize the photographing and/or video recording of myself by the representatives and employees of WIN House. The use of the photograph and/or video recordings may be used for the purpose of developing promotional materials/content for the Volunteer Program. I recognize that this includes written publications, website, and/or social media platforms.

Please indicate your preference below with a check mark:

Yes, I authorize WIN House to photograph and/or record myself as described above.

No, I do not authorize WIN House to photograph and/or record myself as described above.

Volunteer Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

Appendix #3: Volunteer Pledge

Volunteer Pledge

- γ I will conduct myself with the dignity and courtesy and consideration, upholding the code of ethics and standards of WIN House and any of its programs.

- γ I will be punctual and fulfill my duties and accept supervision graciously. I will take any problems, criticisms, or suggestions to the Community Engagement Specialist.

- γ I will not become involved in the personal affairs of clients, residents or their family members relating to any legal, financial, property, belongings, or personal matters.

Volunteer Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

Appendix #4: Oath of Confidentiality

OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Please tick ✓ the contract name that concerns you below (Also attach business card)

Employee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invited Guest of the Board	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service Provider (Indicate category e.g. Phones, Internet, Security etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that while working at WIN House, I will become aware of confidential information about WIN including but not limited to:

- The address and location of the shelters,
- budget and planning information,
- personal and confidential information regarding the identity and circumstances of people who come to WIN for both residential and non-residential support,
- other WIN activities.

I understand that client information may be shared with other individuals or agencies only when the client has given a fully informed and signed release of information.

I agree that I will not disclose any confidential information to any individual or the general public.

I agree that I will not represent WIN or speak publicly on behalf of WIN without prior approval of the Executive Director.

I understand that this information is strictly confidential and may be shared with other individuals or agencies only when the client has given a fully informed and signed release of information.

I understand that any breach of confidentiality will result in an investigation of the breach which may conclude with disciplinary action, up to and including termination any contract that I may have with WIN House.

Name of Company (Printed – If applicable)	
Name (Printed)	
Signature	
Witness (Printed)	
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	

Appendix #5: Organizational Chart

