



# Volunteer Handbook

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## **Welcome to Freedom Project**

Thank you for volunteering with Freedom Project. Our volunteers help us share Nonviolent Communication and mindfulness in prisons and communities throughout Washington State.

The purpose of this volunteer handbook is to both streamline volunteer administration and ensure the quality of Freedom Project programming. Agreements and expectations in this handbook pertain to all Freedom Project volunteers. The Freedom Project Volunteer Handbook does not replace the Department of Corrections (DOC) Volunteer Guidebook. All Freedom Project volunteers are expected to read and adhere to both this document and the DOC Volunteer Guidebook prior to the first prison visit.

The most up to date version of this handbook can be found on the Volunteer Resources page of the Freedom Project website: <http://freedomprojectseattle.org/join-us/volunteer-resources/>

You can find the DOC Volunteer Guidebook here:

<http://www.doc.wa.gov/aboutdoc/docs/P077VolunteerGuidebook.pdf>

### Mission

We support healing connection and restorative communities both inside and outside prison through the strategies of Nonviolent Communication, mindfulness, and racial equity.

### Vision

Together, we shift  
from punishment to restoration,  
from oppression to equity,  
from apathy to empathy.

### Values

**Accountability.** We take responsibility for our impact regardless of our intention and seek to be transparent with ourselves and the community.

**Connection.** Freedom Project embraces authentic relationships, with self and with others, being mindful of the impact we carry from society and systems of oppression.

**Empathy.** Through connecting with the essential humanity and value within ourselves and others, Freedom Project believes in the power of empathy as a healing force.

**Equity.** We value community in which the quality of life, access to resources, and levels of acceptance and contribution are no longer determined by our labels and identities – such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, faith, or whether or not we have been incarcerated.

## Program History

In 1998, Dr. Marshall Rosenberg (who developed Nonviolent Communication), visited the Twin Rivers Unit in the Monroe Correctional Complex of Washington State. He was invited by the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) to introduce NVC to people in custody there. Rusty Thomas, an AVP inmate facilitator at the time, realized the tremendous potential of this work for improving his own life and that of those around him. He approached Lucy Leu, a volunteer of the regional NVC group, and asked her for classes and practice. This inspired Lucy who was already a committed educator and peacemaker. She became an internationally certified CNVC trainer and formed a team to regularly give workshops and classes in the prisons.

The team expanded to include people in custody and those returning from custody, contributing a depth of growth and healing for the community at large. Freedom Project became an independent organization on Martin Luther King Day in 2001.

Over the next three years Freedom Project, expanded into a larger but still informal organization run by a collective of people in custody and community members. In 2004, Freedom Project began to move to a more formalized nonprofit model, one that would allow it to expand. In 2006, Freedom Project acquired tax-exempt nonprofit status IRS 501(c)(3) and hired an executive director.

Currently, Freedom Project programs reach hundreds of people in custody and those returning from custody. Antioch University completed a two-year study on the impact of Freedom Project programs on people in custody. The evidence shows that Freedom Project programs reduces recidivism rates by 43% for participants, saving Washington State over \$5 million dollars annually.

## Organizational Summary

Freedom Project is an innovative organization serving both adults in custody and adults recently released back to the community. As a community of adults in custody, adults returning from custody, family members, and friends, provide opportunities to practice Nonviolent Communication and Mindfulness. We collaborate to provide workshops, classes, and opportunities for meaningful connection.

Freedom Project currently has ongoing programming at the Monroe Correctional Complex (Twin Rivers Unit; Monroe, WA), Airway Heights Corrections Center (Spokane, WA), Clallam Bay Corrections Center (Clallam Bay, WA), Benton County Jail (Kennewick, WA), and Coyote Ridge Corrections Center (Connell, WA). Occasional programming is held at Washington Correction Center for Women (Gig Harbor, WA) and Mission Creek Corrections Center (Belfair, WA). Freedom Project also hosts events in the community that provide opportunities for connection and growth - including monthly Community Circles, an annual Welcome Home Ceremony, and community/volunteer workshops.

## Staff

Freedom Project staff currently comprises five positions: Executive Director/Marketing & Reentry Coordinator, Chief Operating Officer, Prison Programs Director, Reentry Director/Volunteer Trainer, and Donor Relations. The main

contacts for volunteers are the Prison Programs Director and Volunteer Trainer. All Freedom Project staff and Board members welcome open dialogue with volunteers.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Freedom Project does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religious affiliation, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or gender identity or expression.

### **Racial Equity**

Addressing systemic, institutional, organizational and personal racism is integral to accomplishing our mission. Racial equity occurs when racial identity no longer predicts a person's quality of life. Racial justice is equity in action. We seek to address both the way inequity is exhibited and its causes. When persons and structures are actively reinforcing racial inequity and when they passively failing to undo the causes of racial inequity, we work to transform policies, practice, attitudes, and cultural messages.

And we have much to do.

Our first goal is to work toward becoming an anti-racist **organization**. We utilize the "Continuum for Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution" (with permission from Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training)\* to guide our strategies, organizational development, and evaluations. To do this, we design and implement a strategy, timeline with benchmarks, and evaluation process for meeting those goals. This work is our continuing and ongoing practice.

Our second goal is to interrupt racism through our **programming** when we:

- Go into places where systemic racism occurs and offer an equitable environment.
- Support systemic transformation by offering Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and mindfulness training with people who are currently incarcerated and released from incarceration, as well as with people who work in prison and in reentry.
- Train volunteers how to facilitate in a racially-equitable way.
- Share NVC and mindfulness with a racial equity lens
- Ask people to look with compassion and equity at how they view people who have been incarcerated.

\* © Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training, Chicago, IL: Adapted from original concept by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding; further adapted by Melia LaCour, PSESD.

### **Anti-harassment Policy**

Freedom Project will not tolerate conduct that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with the well-being of any participant, volunteer, staff, or community member, or that creates an intimidating, bullying, offensive, or hostile environment.

## Freedom Project Programs

### **Nonviolent Communication and Mindfulness in Prison**

In our intensive workshops and weekly classes, both volunteers and those in custody explore ways to express themselves authentically from the heart and listen empathically. Nonviolent Communication (NVC) workshops introduce the framework of observations, feelings, needs, and requests. In addition to basic courses, we offer theme-based workshops focusing on such topics as anger, self-empathy, conflict resolution and reconciliation.

While mindfulness has many definitions and framings, Thich Nhat Hanh shares “*mindfulness* as the practice of being fully present and alive, body and mind united. Mindfulness is the energy that helps us to know what is going on in the present moment.” Participants learn mindfulness meditation, as well as other mindfulness-based skills.

### **Community Circle**

Community members (folks who have experience in the incarceration system and those who have never been incarcerated) gather at our monthly Community Circle in Seattle. Community Circle is a space for continual NVC and mindfulness practice.

### **Reentry Recall**

Adults released from incarceration (only) are invited to join us for a safe place to share challenges and celebrations for people who are re-entering and wanting transitional support (housing options, food, job opportunities, emotional support, etc.). This event is hosted by reentry staff who are formerly incarcerated themselves.

### **Prison Volunteer Connection Hour**

Current prison volunteers are invited to connect with the Prison Programs Director, Volunteer Trainer, and other Freedom Project prison volunteers. Together, we can explore, reflect, and connect around the experience of going into prison as a volunteer.

### **Community and Volunteer Trainings**

Freedom Project provides community and volunteer trainings throughout the year. Topics include Nonviolent Communication, mindfulness, facilitation, trauma informed facilitation, and racial equity. Workshops are typically held once a month, though location of the workshops rotate between different areas in Washington state.

### Recurring Prison Programs - Schedule

	NVC Weekly Class	NVC Workshops	Mentor Program	Mindfulness Class
TRU (Twin Rivers Unit), Monroe Correctional Complex	<b>X</b> (Wednesdays)	<b>X</b> (3 <sup>rd</sup> Weekends)	<b>X</b> (1st & 3rd Fridays)	<b>X</b> (Mondays)
WSR (Washington State Reformatory, Monroe Correctional Complex)	<b>X</b> (Fridays)			
AHCC (Airway Heights Corrections Center)	<b>X</b> (Fridays)	<b>X</b> (Occasional)		
CBCC (Clallam Bay Corrections Center)	<b>X</b> (Wednesdays)			
CRCC (Coyote Ridge Corrections Center)	<b>X</b> (Mondays)		<b>X</b> (4th Wednesdays)	
Benton County Jail (both Men and Women's Programs)	<b>X</b> (Wednesdays & Fridays)			

### Irregularly Scheduled/Past Program Locations

Washington State Correctional Center for Women (WCCW), Gig Harbor
Mission Creek Corrections Center, Belfair

### Recurring Community Programs - Schedule

Community Program	Frequency & Time	Location	For Who
Community Circle	<i>Monthly</i> 4th Thursday, 6-8 PM	Freedom Project Office	All community members
Reentry Recall	<i>Weekly</i> Every Friday, 6-7 PM	Join by internet: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/521687912">https://zoom.us/j/521687912</a> Or join by phone: +1 669-900-6833 (ID# 521 687 912)	<b>Only folks reentering</b>
Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration Workshop	<i>Monthly</i> 2nd Saturdays, 10 AM - 2:30 PM	Freedom Project Office	All community members
Volunteer Info Session	<i>Monthly</i> 2nd Wednesdays 6-8 PM	Freedom Project Office Or, join by internet: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/806363165">https://zoom.us/j/806363165</a> Or by phone: +1 669 900 6833 (ID# 806 363 165)	All community members interested in volunteering
Community & Volunteer Training	1st Weekend of the Month (may change)	Freedom Project office  (Topics may include NVC, mindfulness, facilitation, trauma informed facilitation, racial equity, etc.)	All community members

## Program/Curriculum Resources

Freedom Project uses a variety of resources to inform our programs and curriculum. Our main sources include:

Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life, 2nd Ed., Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ed. Lucy Leu (PuddleDancer Press, 2003)

Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook: A Practical Guide for Individual, Group or Classroom Study, Lucy Leu (PuddleDancer Press, 2003)

NVC Toolkit for Facilitators: Exercise Manual, Raj Gill, Lucy Leu and Judi Morin (2009)

Path of Freedom: A Mindfulness-Based Emotional Intelligence (MBEI) Workbook for Prisoners, Kate Crisp & Fleet Maull, (Prison Mindfulness Institute, 2006)

## **Commitment to Volunteers**

Freedom Project's goals are brought to life by the active participation of community members. To this end Freedom Project seeks volunteer involvement at all organizational levels and within all appropriate programs and activities.

Volunteers are recognized for their invaluable contributions to Freedom Project and the community. They will be granted meaningful assignments, respect for their skills, effective supervision, full involvement and participation, and performance recognition. Volunteers will agree to perform their roles to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to Freedom Project's mission, values, goals, policies, and procedures.

## Volunteer Roles

Freedom Project relies on volunteers' gifts of time and energy. The various roles and activities that volunteers can provide include prison volunteer (from class support to facilitation), office volunteer, Community Circle participant, community workshop co-facilitator, board committee participant, subcommittee participant (ex: communications & marketing), or any other specialized role/skill that volunteers bring. Examples of specialized roles may include web design, graphic design, musical ability, event planning, social media, or any other talent that you hope to bring.

## Board of Directors and Committees

The Board of Directors articulates and represents the mission and goals of Freedom Project to the community and is accountable to the community for the organization's activities and operations. The Board of Directors has the overall responsibility for the conduct, health and effectiveness of Freedom Project.

The Board of Directors meets monthly. Board members are expected to serve on one or more committees (Programs Committee, Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee, Finance Committee, Executive Committee, Marketing Committee, and Investments Committee). Each Board member holds office for up to two 3-year terms beginning January 1st of any given year, unless filling a seat for a particular vacancy. Proficiency in NVC and mindfulness is not a prerequisite for membership; however there is a requirement for on-going involvement with Freedom Project classes.

Community members, volunteers, and those previously in custody are strongly encouraged to join our committees.

Please inquire with the office and staff as to positions available on both the Board of Directors and committees.

### Outside Volunteers

The Department of Corrections classifies volunteer participants in programs as **guests, volunteers, volunteer sponsors** or as a **group sponsor**. In prison, everyone is expected to wear a color-coded badge at all times, identifying their classification as guest (pink), volunteer (red). Sponsor badges are red and designated with a particular indication – which may include a color-coded clasp that attaches the badge or an “S” on the badge.

The group sponsor is responsible for scheduling programs, organizing guest visits and managing the relationship between Freedom Project and the prison administrative programming staff (known as Community Partnership Programs at some prisons). The Department of Corrections expects all requests from guests, volunteers and sponsors to be channeled through the group sponsor, which will be the responsibility of either the Freedom Project's Prison Programs Director or the prison liaison for the local volunteer group (for example, for the Airway Heights Corrections Center in Spokane or the Clallam Bay Corrections Center in Clallam Bay).

The facilitation team assigned to a particular scheduled program may include participants, small group facilitators, co-facilitators and a lead facilitator. Facilitators may include inside mentors (see below). The lead facilitator is responsible for directing a particular class or workshop, with the assistance of other team members. Typically a lead facilitator has experience facilitating practice groups or workshops in the community. Most Freedom Project facilitators have been certified either by the Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC) or the Prison Mindfulness Institute.

### Inside Volunteer (Mentors)

Inside volunteers (Mentors) are those in custody who serve as a resource for other program participants and DOC staff members who are interested in Freedom Project programs. They contribute to the quality and depth of our programs by sharing personal examples and stories that illustrate major concepts. They also engage with Freedom Project facilitators in monthly debriefing and planning sessions, which improves the effectiveness of future programs.

### Administrative Support Volunteers

Freedom Project welcomes volunteers who are interested in supporting Freedom Project in its administrative and operational work.

Internships may be available depending on current staffing and capacity. Individuals interested in internships may speak with Freedom Project staff to see if there is alignment between the organization's needs and the intern's interests and skills.

### Community Volunteers

Freedom Project's work alongside people who have been impacted by incarceration extends to the community setting as well. Community Circles, for instance, offer a space for all community members (with and without a history in the criminal justice system) to come together to practice empathy and compassion through NVC.

Other community events include our annual Welcome Home Ceremony (welcoming back those from incarceration), Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration workshops, and other opportunities for connection. Joining us for these events is an important way to support our mission in creating connection, empathy, and understanding.

Finally, if you have any unique skills or services that you would like to gift Freedom Project (photography, event planning, website design, etc.), please contact Freedom Project staff to discuss what you hope to contribute and how we can work together.

### Support for Volunteers

Freedom Project will describe to potential volunteers the work of the organization, assist new volunteers in finding a suitable role, and support volunteers in finding relevant trainings (to include external training if necessary).

Freedom Project will offer support and empathy during difficult situations. Your experience will change and grow over time and we encourage you to make use of help from your fellow volunteers and Freedom Project staff whenever you feel uncertain, confused or uncomfortable with any situation. There is no question not worth answering, and it is essential that volunteers understand that there is support when confronting the challenges of our work.

If you have a concerning incident that you would like to report, you may talk to a Freedom Project staff member, request a hard-copy of our Concerning Incident Report Form, or access this form electronically at <http://bit.ly/FPImpactReport>. Incidents include any behavior, event, or situation that have a harmful impact or potential harmful impact to Freedom Project participants, staff, volunteers, or the community pertaining and may relate to issues of safe spaces, personal well-being, morale, effectiveness to fulfill Freedom Project mission/vision/values, commitment to racial equity & social justice, facility / property, legal liabilities, and/or public image. This form may be completed directly by concerned person or verbally reported to a Freedom Project staff member who will transcribe the incident on this form at the time of report.

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to carpool when attending prison programs. This allows volunteers to plan and debrief the workshop and to provide support and empathy for each other both before and after the session. Volunteers who provide transportation to a Freedom Project prison program can request travel expenses by sending a Reimbursement Form to the Executive Director. You may request this form from the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, or Prison Programs Director.

### Working within the Freedom Project Community and Department of Corrections

Freedom Project works with people both inside Washington State prisons and outside in our communities. Both Freedom Project and Department of Corrections policies help to guide our work both inside and outside of prison and are established to help provide boundaries and clarity for all community members. Please read these policies carefully, making sure you completely understand each point. If you have any questions about any of the policies, please contact Freedom Project staff, who will help answer any questions or concerns.

Different histories with the criminal justice system may evoke emotional pain, discomfort, or fear. If you are feeling any

emotional discomfort, speak with staff about it. To respect privacy, any Freedom Project community member should not ask those in custody or those returning from custody about their crimes. We are in community with the person that is present with us in the moment, not with what they did in the past.

Freedom Project aspires to bring a trauma-informed approach to our programs in prison and the community. In this, we recognize the traumas (including individual, interpersonal, and institutional) experienced by community members - including traumas related to being the target of violence, violence that increases the chances of incarceration, or violence experienced during incarceration. In response, we collectively work to offer opportunities for healing and reconciliation.

You may find yourself feeling uncomfortable around someone who is associated with Freedom Project (whether it's another volunteer, staff member, person in custody, or those returning from custody). If you are experiencing these feelings yourself or you are worried about the actions of another individual who's associated with Freedom Project, we ask that you report this through the Concerning Incident/Impact form (<http://bit.ly/FPConcerningIncidents>) or talk about these feelings with a staff or board member. Another option would be to call a Restorative Circle so we can, as a community, take measures to protect everyone's safety and preserve the integrity of Freedom Project's programs.

## **Responsibilities of the Volunteer**

### Freedom Project Expectations of Volunteers

To ensure program effectiveness, it is important for us to develop a foundation of trust among team members and with all of the organizations with whom we work, including DOC. In this light we make the following requests:

- We request that you accept your assignments, and perform your role with a sense of responsibility and commitment.
- We request that you examine the time commitment required for your role and commit to working with Freedom Project to fulfill that commitment.
- Volunteers must **attend and document required trainings**. Volunteers are expected to attend 14 hours of professional development training (NVC, mindfulness, or facilitation) and 6 hours of anti-oppression training. See details for On-Going Requirements. Freedom Project staff will also work with volunteers to identify training needs, opportunities, and necessary documentation. You can report trainings taken outside of Freedom Project at <http://bit.ly/FPReportTraining>.
- Freedom Project is committed to equity based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, indigeneity, national origin, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, etc. We all have a responsibility to examine the ways that inequities impact our prison programs, organization, community, and ourselves as individuals. As such, Freedom Project works toward a culture that actively names and unpacks instances of oppression (racism,

sexism, ageism, ableism, etc.). Volunteers are expected to report concerning incidents (see above), engage in these conversations, examine their own positionality within privilege and oppression, and be accountable for the impact of their behaviors and interactions.

- Our programs are enriched and deepened when volunteers bring creativity, new ideas, and energy to what we do. We welcome proposals (see <http://bit.ly/FPPProgramRequest> or Appendix A of Program Manual at <http://bit.ly/FPPProgramManual>) for new programs and classes, in addition to new facilities and populations. **These proposals must be approved by the Freedom Project Programming Committee before implementing.**
- To ensure effective and relevant outcomes for participants, our programs rely heavily on the evaluation and improvement of all programmatic aspects. Volunteers are requested to facilitate and participate in **evaluation processes** as determined by Freedom Project. This includes:
  - **Providing and collecting feedback forms** to participants at the end of every Freedom Project program (allowing at least 15 minutes for participants to complete forms).
  - Engaging with the Freedom Project community (staff, mentors, program participants, other volunteers) in the **debriefing and reflection processes**. Feedback is welcomed from all individuals involved in Freedom Project programs. Volunteers are expected to openly listen to feedback from various sources and explore their strengths, learning edges, and ways that they can grow in their work inside prisons and in the community.
  - **Documenting any session agendas and class series/workshop curriculum that extends beyond established Freedom Project curriculum**, in addition to providing this information to the Freedom Project office. This allows us to be accountable for the material and curriculum presented in Freedom Project programming. New curriculum and agendas will be accessible to all Freedom Project prison volunteers (see “Resources” to learn more about accessing material).
- Volunteer hours need to be logged and submitted to Freedom Project staff in a timely fashion in order to accurately track and report our work. **Please use <http://bit.ly/ReportFPHours> to report your volunteer hours to Freedom Project or request a personal document to track volunteer hours from the Prison Programs Director.**
- Be on time for your commitment. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, we request that you call as soon as possible so a replacement can be found. Telephone numbers can be found on the cover page of this document.
- After participating in a Freedom Project program or facilitating a workshop inside or outside of prison, volunteers are highly encouraged to participate in a debriefing session. Debriefs allow volunteers to celebrate achievements, identify challenges, and offer empathy and support for each other.

- Due to restrictions that some folks may have while on parole, most of our programs in prison and many of them in the community are not open to children under the age of 18. For everyone's safety, please do not bring children to any volunteer position or event sponsored by Freedom Project. If you have any questions about this request, please feel free to discuss it with staff or long-time volunteers.
- Freedom Project's core mission is providing opportunities to explore the skills of nonviolence and mindfulness. Proposals for expanded programs or new avenues of exploration are always welcome at the Program Committee.

### Important DOC Policy Information

The Department of Corrections (DOC) policy absolutely governs the conduct between volunteers and people who are incarcerated with regards to relationships and contact. Please be aware that DOC guidelines may change - visit <http://bit.ly/DOC-Policies> for the most current DOC policies.

It is critical that all volunteers read, understand, and adhere to all policies set forth by the DOC and Freedom Project. This is not only for your safety, but for the safety of the people inside the prisons. An "innocent" act could have unintentional but dire consequences, not just for you and Freedom Project programming, but especially for program participants. Failure to comply with these policies can result in investigations and penalties for the volunteer and organization, in addition to putting all people associated with Freedom Project programs in jeopardy (volunteers, participants, and the programs themselves). Please read the following guidelines and sign to acknowledge your agreement to these policies.

- **Do not have any communication with incarcerated people outside the parameters of your volunteer position.**
- Do not let stereotypes, biases, and other prejudices affect your work.
- If you find that you know or have met a formerly incarcerated individual personally, you must inform Freedom Project staff immediately and fill out DOC 03-039 (Report of Contact with an Offender).
- Do not have any financial dealings with an incarcerated individual or accept gifts, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant it might appear. This is a direct violation of established boundaries, and is strictly forbidden.
- Do not offer legal advice to an incarcerated person, do not assist in court action, and do not file any legal papers for them. You can refer them to an appropriate legal service.
- Physical contact should be limited to a handshake.
- **Do not give ANY personal information to ANY incarcerated individual;** this includes your own personal information as well as that of other volunteers, staff, or incarcerated people.
- Inform Freedom Project and DOC immediately if you have a change of your contact information. It is imperative that all contact information is kept current.
- If there is a change in your criminal history record, you must immediately inform the DOC and Freedom Project.

- Former prison volunteers must wait three (3) years to apply for visitations with an incarcerated individual, per [DOC policy 450.300 \(http://bit.ly/DOC-Visits\)](http://bit.ly/DOC-Visits). Freedom Project asks former prison volunteers to not contact people currently incarcerated or former participants recently released (via phone, mail, or e-mail) for at least six (6) months after relinquishing your volunteer badge.

### Dual Relationships

Freedom Project volunteers are not permitted to participate in any dual relationship with Freedom Project program participants. Examples of "dual relationships" include, but are not limited to, the volunteer being the Freedom Project participant's employer, employee, legal advisor, protective payee, power of attorney, sexual partner, psychotherapist, health care provider, landlord, tenant, or housemate. Any concerns or exceptions to this policy must be discussed with Freedom Project staff before entering the relationship.

### Religious Practices

Both the DOC and Freedom Project have policies pertaining to the advocacy and proselytization of a religion.

As a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we cannot under any circumstances advocate for any religious purpose whatsoever. Should that happen we could be at risk of losing our nonprofit status. This does not mean that religion or philosophies can't be discussed, but no one person can advocate for any one religion. If a volunteer, within their volunteer position for Freedom Project, is believed to be advocating in this way, that volunteer will be suspended pending a full investigation and may be permanently dismissed.

[DOC Policy 530.100 \(http://bit.ly/DOC-VolunteerPrograms\)](http://bit.ly/DOC-VolunteerPrograms) likewise prohibits "unsolicited, unwanted or forceful attempts to persuade others to convert from one religious belief to another"

### Important Freedom Project Guideline Information

Some of these Freedom Project guidelines are a reiteration of DOC policies that we find to be of particular importance.

- Freedom Project requires two volunteers for all programs. Exceptions to this policy should be discussed with Freedom Project staff.
- Facilitators are asked to phrase personal sharing in a way that shows understanding and connection without divulging overly familiar personal stories. For example, you might say "My life has been impacted by domestic violence," rather than "My ex-spouse abused me."
- Freedom Project volunteers may not carry contraband, weapons, drugs, or alcohol while representing Freedom Project. Volunteers who show signs of having consumed alcohol or any drug will not be permitted to perform their duties. They will be asked to meet with Freedom Project staff before resuming their duties.
- Regarding infectious tuberculosis, infectious hepatitis, infectious pneumonia: When a Freedom Project volunteer's health status is infectious, they will not meet with their small group, Freedom Project staff or board members. When the volunteer achieves noninfectious status after recovery/treatment, all Freedom Project

activities may be resumed.

- If a Freedom Project community member is informed that an individual has ALL THREE of the following: **the means, the plan and the IMMEDIATE intent to commit suicide, please use the Crisis Clinic hotline (24 hours) 4613222 or 1-800-244-5767**. Call 911 only if the individual has a lethal weapon or the suicide is in progress.
- Volunteers are expected to respect workshop participants' beliefs and choices (e.g. religious, political, medical, relationship, etc.) and should refrain from imposing their own personal belief system onto participants. If solicited, volunteers may share their personal values and core beliefs. At no time is it acceptable to try to convince participants of any world-view or belief system.
- As mentioned above, Freedom Project asks former prison volunteers to not contact people currently incarcerated or former participants recently released (via phone, mail, or e-mail) for at least six (6) months after relinquishing your volunteer badge.

## On-Boarding and On-Going Training Requirements

### Freedom Project Requirements

Freedom Project requires specific training for both new and current volunteers to ensure quality and accountability of our programs.

Professional in-service trainings are offered through Freedom Project to help volunteers meet these requirements. Monthly Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration Workshops provide the anti-oppression training that we expect volunteers to bring with them into prison and to continue exploring during their time with Freedom Project. Trainings in NVC (both basics and advanced), facilitation skills, and mindfulness will provide opportunities for both new and experienced volunteers.

### Initial Requirements for All Volunteers

Potential and new Freedom Project Prison Volunteers are required to complete three components of Freedom Project training. This includes:

- **2 hours** of orientation at Freedom Project's **Volunteer Info Session**
- **4 hours** of training through Freedom Project's monthly **Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration Workshops**
- **10 hours** of training through Freedom Project's volunteer training workshops

### On-Going Prison Volunteer Requirements

Annual and on-going training expectations for current volunteers include:

- At least **14 hours** of professional **facilitation, NVC, or mindfulness training**
  - Monthly Freedom Project community workshops will provide opportunities to meet this requirement; additionally, workshops inside prison count toward this requirement if you are *not* participating in a facilitation capacity

- At least **6** hours of **anti-oppression training**
  - Can be satisfied through Freedom Project's Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration training; other trainings and events may qualify with approval of Freedom Project staff

### Department of Corrections Requirements

After two sessions as a guest, volunteers may ask Freedom Project for an application to the **DOC New Volunteer Orientation**. These orientation trainings happen several times a year. See below for more information on this process (Prison Program Volunteers – How to Apply to Become a Freedom Project Prison Volunteer).

The DOC also requires annual trainings to be completed (typically) by the end of June in order for volunteers to maintain their badge. These online trainings include the topics of Suicide Prevention, Infectious Disease, and PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act).

- *Prison volunteers are required to complete annual online trainings through the Learning Management System (LMS)*
- *Includes PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act), Suicide Prevention, & Infectious Disease*
- *Annual due date is (typically) end of June*

### Process of Becoming a Prison Volunteer

To volunteer for Freedom Project prison programs, new volunteers must complete the following steps:

1. Complete Freedom Project's new volunteer orientation (as described above)
2. Visit a Freedom Project program as a guest
3. Apply through the DOC to become a prison volunteer

### How to apply to be a guest for a Freedom Project program

After completing Freedom Project orientation (Volunteer Info Session and Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration Workshop), we may invite you to visit one of our programs in prison. As our guest, we expect you to actively participate in the Freedom Project program during your scheduled visit. The Department of Corrections allows up to three (3) guests to visit a program at the same time.

Procedures for being a guest varies by facility. Please submit any applications or information necessary for visit well before the deadline for your visit.

- *Monroe Correctional Complex:* The Prison Programs Director must **submit a guest application** (to be filled out by the volunteer) to the Community Partnerships office **at least two weeks before** the scheduled visit.
- *Washington Corrections Center for Women:* Guests must provide **full legal name(s), date of birth, and the last four digits of their social security number**. The Prison Programs Director must submit this

information to DOC staff two weeks before the intended visit.

- *Airway Heights Correctional Center*: This facility does not currently offer guest visits for volunteer programs.

### **How to apply through the DOC to become a prison volunteer with Freedom Project**

After your visit to one of our programs as a guest, we may invite you to apply for a red volunteer badge so you can continue to participate in our prison programs. This requires volunteers to attend a Prison Volunteer Orientation through the Department of Corrections (unaffiliated with Freedom Project as an organization).

- To apply for the DOC orientation, you **must submit the complete DOC application** to the Freedom Project Prison Programs Director or volunteer prison liaison.
  - These documents include: volunteer application, sexual misconduct disclosure, institutional employment disclosure, criminal history disclosure, and criminal background check.
  - These forms must be submitted **45 days before the date of the next scheduled orientation**.
  - Once we receive these forms, we will countersign and submit the forms to the DOC.
- Volunteers are then required to **complete online trainings in PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act), Suicide Prevention, and Infection Disease**.
  - Upon receipt of your application, staff from the Community Partnerships Office will contact you with information on accessing their Learning Management System (LMS) to complete these trainings.
  - After completing these online courses, the Community Partnerships Office will confirm that you are scheduled to attend the next available orientation.
- Volunteers then **attend the three hour orientation** conducted by the Department of Corrections at the prison where you have applied for your badge.
- Your red volunteer badge will be available the following month after you complete the orientation.
- All volunteers (including sponsors) are also expected by the Department of Corrections to **maintain their volunteer status by completing online training each year**.

### **How to apply to become a Freedom Project prison volunteer sponsor**

A volunteer sponsor is responsible for supervising guests and other volunteers when they participate in our prison programs. If no sponsor is available, a scheduled program will be cancelled by the prison administrative or custody staff. For this reason, we make every effort to assign a backup sponsor for every scheduled prison program.

After you volunteer regularly in prison for at least 6-12 months, we may invite you to become a sponsor by attending sponsor training at the prison where you have been volunteering. Sponsors are expected by the Department of Corrections to renew their sponsor status by attending an in-person sponsor training each year.

## Annual Volunteer Reflection

Volunteers will go through an Annual Volunteer Reflection interview with designated office staff. This interview is designed for volunteers to reflect on their year of activity as well as assist the office staff to stay tuned with volunteer's experiences, impact, and learning. Interviews will be documented and archived.

This process can be initiated as a result of an annual interview, staff request, volunteer request, or Impact Report. Process must begin within 30 days of initiation.

## Volunteer Review and Termination of Volunteer Agreement

If a Volunteer Reflection process or concerning Impact Report indicates that a volunteer's behavior, actions, or values do not coincide with Freedom Project's mission or values, office staff may initiate a Volunteer Review. **While Freedom Project staff intends to work collaboratively with volunteers throughout this process, any volunteer may be dismissed at any time depending on the seriousness of behavior and the impact on community, organizational, or individual safety and equity.**

Additionally, specific circumstances that may initiate this process include:

- The volunteer violates participant-related policies, including but not limited to dual relationships, sexual misconduct, or any other behaviors that breaches DOC policies.
- The volunteer establishes a repeated pattern of behavior that causes concern expressed by participants, group members, staff, or other community members. If the involved parties cannot resolve the matter without outside intervention, either party may request assistance from Freedom Project staff.

In order to ensure adequate assessment and resolution of the situation, the following steps will be taken:

- A staff member will engage in dialogue with the volunteer to explore the disconnection that may be occurring and work toward empathy, understanding, and new strategies.
- If the volunteer and staff member cannot reach an agreement on new strategies, the staff member will consult with other Freedom Project staff on conditions to maintain volunteer status and possible resolutions. Staff will make every effort to ensure the volunteer's confidentiality.
- After 60 days, the staff and volunteer will meet and assess whether new strategies are being implemented and are effective in addressing issues. Outcomes may include:
  - Resuming volunteer role
  - Re-engaging in dialogue to establish deeper understanding or more effective strategies
  - Exploring alternative volunteer roles in the Freedom Project community
  - Ending volunteer position with Freedom Project

- If the volunteer disagrees with the actions taken by staff, the volunteer has the option of filing a grievance pursuant to the grievance policy.
  - Freedom Project believes in using honest and open dialog to address grievances, when reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. Options include restorative circles, "coaching", or counseling.
  - We prefer to use Restorative Circles to resolve internal conflicts. If you are experiencing conflict with another within Freedom Project and you are not able to resolve it yourself you can call or send an email message to the current Executive Director or to the President of the Board, indicating times when you would be available for a confidential Pre-Circle. In return you will receive a list of experienced Restorative Circles facilitators. Please review the list and identify anyone on the list who might have a conflict of interest if they were asked to facilitate. After learning more about Restorative Circles process during your Pre-Circle you can decide if you want to go ahead with this process and indicate who else needs to be in this Circle. In the Circle itself everyone will have a chance to talk about how they have been impacted by the conflict and then invited to take responsibility for their own actions and reactions. After meeting in a Circle to discuss the conflict with others who have been impacted by the conflict, together all will decide on an action plan and schedule a Post-Circle where all can meet again to celebrate the resolution or, if need, make another action plan.

The intention of this policy is to protect the rights of everyone involved and to provide adequate support to all parties if possible. It is the desire of the organization to maintain and support our volunteers. The volunteer and/or the staff member may request to have another volunteer or other staff member present for support and guidance during any discussion.

### Use of the Freedom Project Name

Current and former volunteers are required to obtain prior approval from Freedom Project staff before using the Freedom Project name on printed material(s).

### **Freedom Project Volunteer Links**

Freedom Project Volunteer Application Submission (**required**): <http://bit.ly/FPVolunteerApplication>

Freedom Project Volunteer Hour Reporting Form: <http://bit.ly/ReportFPHours>

Freedom Project Program Manual: <http://bit.ly/FPProgramManual>

Program Request: <http://bit.ly/FPProgramRequest>

External Trainings/Workshop Report (for annual training expectation): <http://bit.ly/FPReportTraining>

Concerning Incident/Impact Report Form: <http://bit.ly/FPConcerningIncidents>

## **Resources**

There are a number of accessible resources for volunteers regarding Freedom Project's work and many topics that impact our work.

**Research on Freedom Project's Impact:** Suarez, A., Lee, D.Y., Rowe, C., Gomez, A.A., Murowchick, E., Linn, P.L. (2014). Freedom Project: Nonviolent Communication and Training in Prison. *Sage Open*, 4 (1). February 8, 2014. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2158244013516154>

**Prison Dharma Network:** <http://www.prisonmindfulness.org/>

**Center for Nonviolent Communication:** <http://www.cnvc.org/>

**NVC Academy:** <http://nvctraining.com/index.php>

**Path of Freedom Curriculum/Training** (discounts available):  
<http://www.prisonmindfulness.org/projects/path-of-freedom/>

**Freedom Project Anti-Oppression Mass Incarceration Workshop Presentation:** Part 1, [https://youtu.be/OE76\\_OKAiHA](https://youtu.be/OE76_OKAiHA) and Part 2, <https://youtu.be/d4bNM9-5ebU>

**Freedom Project maintains Volunteer Resources on our GoogleDrive. Please request access from the Prison Programs Director or Volunteer Coordinator** (Google account required for access).

Please visit our Volunteer Resources page on the Freedom Project website to find additional and updated resources: <http://freedomprojectseattle.org/join-us/volunteer-resources/>.