

# Dwelling Place Volunteer Program Procedures

## Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

### March 2021

#### Overview

Providing residents, donors, board members, and community volunteers with opportunities to get involved with the mission of Dwelling Place is an essential part of reducing the adverse social and mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteering reduces stress, combats depression, prevents feelings of isolation, and gives a sense of purpose and meaning<sup>1</sup>. Volunteer programs at Dwelling Place bring communities together for collective action, beautification, and betterment of the lives of people.

In addition to these interventions designed to address COVID-19's toll on the community, volunteer activities support several critical components of the Community Building & Engagement Department (CB&E) and Dwelling Place's Strategic Plan. From the 2021 CB&E Work Plan:

We expand community capacity by building interpersonal relationships between residents in our housing communities and by acting as a bridge between the outside community. Strategic partnerships with stakeholders expand social networks and relationships with local organizations, universities, business associations, police officials, politicians, government officials, and decision-makers. These relationships build access to needed resources, grow opportunities for neighbors, and boost a sense of connection to where we live, work, and play.

The purpose of this document is to outline the ways in which Dwelling Place Volunteer Programming is adapting for COVID-19 risk reduction and addressing the challenges of the pandemic. Dwelling Place can not guarantee safety for volunteers. However, Volunteer Programming will ensure informed consent from volunteers and use guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA), and the Kent County Health Department (KCHD).

All volunteers who participate in in-person events must complete the Dwelling Place COVID Health Assessment Form *and* sign the Volunteer Agreement form, releasing Dwelling Place from all liability. In the event of a COVID-related incident, the incident procedure form will be followed and the appropriate materials filed. The Kent County Health Department has advised Dwelling Place to not engage in contact-tracing procedures; all contact tracing after a COVID incident will be handled by the KCHD or the appropriate Health Department for the county where volunteer activities took place. All volunteers should also review the Dwelling Place COVID Preparedness and Response Plan<sup>2</sup>.

#### CDC, MIOSHA, and KCHD Guidelines and Best Practices

The CDC defines four categories<sup>3</sup> of risk for events and gatherings:

- Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.

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<sup>1</sup> [ableto.com/resources/mental-health-benefits-of-volunteering/](https://ableto.com/resources/mental-health-benefits-of-volunteering/)

<sup>2</sup> [dwellingplacegr.org/covid-19-virus-response](https://dwellingplacegr.org/covid-19-virus-response)

<sup>3</sup> [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html)

- **More risk:** Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- **Higher risk:** Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.
- **Highest risk:** Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

**All Volunteer Programming will be limited to Lowest Risk or More Risk.**

From MIOSHA Emergency Rules:<sup>4</sup> "'Close contact' means someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the person is isolated."

**Close contact will be avoided and controlled for in all Volunteer Programming.**

The Kent County Health Department provides best practices to employers and employees for getting back to work.<sup>5</sup> These practices include but are not limited to:

- Practice good hygiene
- Stop handshaking & avoid touching face
- Increase ventilation
- Use videoconferencing
- Adjust/postpone large gatherings
- Limit food sharing
- Stay home if you or a family member is sick
- Use booking system to stagger customers
- Practice social distancing
- Hold meetings in open spaces
- Remind staff of hand washing
- Sanitize high traffic areas

**Volunteer Programming will consider all of the above best practices when proceeding with events.**

### **Dwelling Place Definitions and Examples**

Low risk opportunities are based on CDC definitions of "Lowest Risk" and are already integrated into much of Dwelling Place's Volunteer Programming. These opportunities take place remotely using platforms such as Zoom, phone calling, and emailing. Examples of additional volunteer programming that is considered "lowest risk" include:

- Collaborative Writing projects (using simultaneous editing)
- Serving on a Dwelling Place committee or the Board of Directors
- Digital volunteer orientations
- Mailing supply kits to participants

Example: Contactless pickup/drop-off, wherein DP staff have left a sanitized item or receive a sanitized item on a folding table at an agreed-upon outdoor location, preferably the sidewalk

<sup>4</sup> [michigan.gov/documents/leo/Final\\_MIOSHA\\_Rules\\_705164\\_7.pdf](https://michigan.gov/documents/leo/Final_MIOSHA_Rules_705164_7.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [kentcountybacktowork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Guidelines-and-Best-Practices-General.pdf](https://kentcountybacktowork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Guidelines-and-Best-Practices-General.pdf)

outside of CB&E office, is an example of a low-risk volunteer opportunity. DP staff and the volunteer who is picking up/dropping off may interact for any amount of time, so long as both parties are outdoors, masked, and remain 6ft apart.

More-risk opportunities are based on the CDC's definition of "More Risk" activities and involve socially-distant onsite activities with limited participation with small groups of volunteers. At outdoor events involving small groups of volunteers (maximum 25 persons), project groups will be designated and assigned prior to arrival (for more information about project groups, see "Social Distancing and Group Sizes" section on page 4). Indoor events are limited to 2 persons. **Close contact is always avoided even in the "more-risk" category.** Examples of volunteer programming at "more risk" include:

- Outdoor landscaping/beautification activities (eg. Bulb Planting in Heartside, National Neighborhood Promise Day [see case study on pg 4], Property Days)
- Welcome Home Basket Drives
- Indoor property decoration (eg. Door Decoration Competition)
- Assembling collection drive items in-person at CB&E offices
- Curb Appeal Assessments
- Event support

Example: Welcome Home Basket collection drives, which have been ongoing in the winter of 2020/21, have been coordinated via videoconferencing and email. Volunteers have used online shopping platforms and in-person shopping trips to collect items, and staff have picked up items or coordinated drop-off at CB&E Offices using either in-person, reduced-contact pickup or contactless pickup (see above for description of contactless pickup).

- In-person, reduced-contact pickup/drop off, wherein both parties are masked and remain 6ft apart, occurs over a brief (max. 10 minutes) amount of time indoors, preferably at CB&E offices.

Example: Bulb Planting in Heartside, a series of outdoor events that took place in September of 2020, was a more-risk opportunity that involved breaking into very small project groups (as described on pg. 4 under "Social Distancing and Group Sizes"), mask-wearing, and social distancing.

Example: A volunteer comes to 106 South Division to help with scanning documents for an archival project. Training with staff is held ahead of time on Zoom. The volunteer is scheduled for a day with only 1- 2 other onsite staff. Upon arrival they complete the health assessment, a brief onsite orientation is completed, they begin work in a limited space within the facility (i.e. confined largely to one room).

### Personal Protective Equipment

All staff, volunteers, and participants will wear at least one (1) mask per person at all times during Volunteer Program events. Disposable masks will be kept on-hand for those residents, volunteers, or other visitors who arrive without already wearing a mask. Staff will be responsible for enforcing proper mask-wearing. Masks provided by Spectrum Health.

Tools will not be shared. For events that use tools, tools will be sanitized thoroughly between uses. Sanitizing could include, depending on material and design of tool, being washed with

bleach water, wiped with disinfecting wipes, or sprayed with disinfecting products that are designed for hard-to-kill viruses.

Hand-washing and/or hand sanitizing will be mandatory at all events. Staff will encourage volunteers to wash or sanitize frequently. Mobile hand washing station will be available onsite at outdoor events.

Disposable nitrile gloves will NOT be used, per reopening best practices and recommendations provided by Kent County Health Department.

### Social Distancing and Group Sizes

Dwelling Place will work to proceed with caution in accordance with the State of Michigan's social distance and group size recommendations. Each project group will be accompanied by a staff person so that PPE and social distancing parameters are enforced.

Indoor spaces:

- Will not be used by groups, only individuals or couples from the same household
- Social distancing will be doubled (minimum of 12 ft) when in the same room
- Must be large enough to accommodate such distancing
- Outside volunteers (non-DP residents) are restricted to CB&E Offices at 106 S. Division and are not allowed at other residential properties
- Examples:
  - Scenario 1: Involves a residential community lobby decoration project, and is restricted to residents of that property. A resident volunteer comes to CB&E Offices for contactless pickup of a Project Kit. They participate in a Zoom call training with staff, reinforcing COVID procedures/best practices. The resident and their daughter then decorate the lobby of their building using the Project Kit
  - Scenario 2: A volunteer comes to 106 South Division for a painting project. Upon arrival, they complete the Dwelling Place COVID Health Assessment and the Volunteer Agreement. Staff describe the project and provide sanitized or brand-new paint brushes and rollers. Staff encourage frequent water breaks, but such breaks are only provided outdoors. Staff remain within sight of volunteers to enforce social distancing and mask-wearing.

Outdoor spaces:

- Social distancing of 6ft between individuals from different households will be maintained at all times
- Project groups that work in relative physical proximity and are comprised of more than one household will be limited in size to three (3) separate households, with a maximum group size of (6) persons
- Examples:
  - Group 1 can be comprised of one cohabiting couple, one individual person, and a three-person family
  - Group 2 can consist of three individuals who live in different households

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*Case study: National Neighborhood Promise Day (with Republic Services) 05/21/21*

→ *Two, 12-person meta-groups (one in the morning [10:00-12:00] and one in the afternoon [2:00-4:00])*

- *Dwelling Place Mobile Hand Washing Station will be available for volunteers/staff*
  - *Ask Republic to break up into 3-person teams and get names to DP before arrival (one staff person per team, total 4 people per team incl. staff)*
  - *NO LUNCH PROVIDED TO VOLUNTEERS (snacks/water will be included in their project kit)*
  - *Each person will be provided with a project kit, laid out in a bag and/or pile (depending on size of tools and type of project)*
  - *DURING LUNCH BREAK: DP Staff reassemble kits for each team, sanitize shared tools, eat lunch individually in their own vehicles*
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### Notifications to Participants

Volunteers will be required to complete a contractor/visitor health assessment form during sign-in. COVID-reminder signage from the CDC will be visible at events whenever possible. Volunteers will be provided with the following verbal directions and written notifications:

- Volunteers will be asked to complete a health questionnaire prior to attending
- Volunteers will be asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement, releasing liability
- If you are sick with COVID-19, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from other people until it is safe to be around others
- Volunteers are required to wear masks at all times (masks will be provided for those who forget to bring their own), and are required to maintain six feet of distance between households
- Social distancing and mask-wearing will be observed and enforced by Dwelling Place staff
- Volunteers from separate households are advised against co-mingling
- Group meals will not be offered during the event. However, volunteers will be provided with snacks and beverages, and are asked to only remove masks while actively eating or drinking, making sure to mask up between bites and sips

### Food & Beverage

Group meals, barbecues, or other food-sharing activities will not be a part of volunteer programs in 2021 unless the CDC, MIOSHA and KCDH determine that this type of event is no longer a significant risk for infection. However, volunteers participating in longer, outdoor events will be provided with prepackaged snacks and individual beverages.

- Snack bags are pre-assembled and sanitized the day before the event. They include snacks and beverages and an additional disposable mask (provided by Spectrum Health).
- Food and beverages can be consumed only outdoors during water breaks, which staff persons will offer and encourage at staged intervals during projects. Persons from different households will stand 12 or more feet apart when consuming food and beverages.

### Ride Sharing/Transportation

Volunteers from the same household are encouraged to carpool to volunteer activities, as parking may be limited at certain project sites. Volunteers from separate households are advised against sharing rides to volunteer activities.

Public transportation or ride-sharing services such as Uber or Lyft may be necessary for some volunteers to get to volunteer activities. Although Dwelling Place has provided assistance with this coordination in the past, it encourages those individuals who would use public transportation or ride-sharing services to stay home in lieu of taking this additional risk.