



Volunteer Handbook

Metro South Volunteers is a program of the Bloomington Public Schools.
A collaboration with the Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield
Community Education Departments.

Metro South Adult Basic Education
2575 West 88th Street
Bloomington, MN 55431

www.metrosouth.org

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Welcome

We are pleased you have chosen to join us at Metro South Volunteers. Our volunteers are an integral part of the programs of Metro South Adult Basic Education and play a valuable role in helping students reach their academic goals. Volunteers contribute to providing a well-rounded educational experience for all learners enrolled in our programs – from extra support with reading skills to exploring new career opportunities or resources or leading a class. Your willingness to make a difference in the lives of our students contributes to their success as members of our community. We hope the investment of your time will prove to be rewarding and challenging, as well as provide many opportunities for you to engage in lifelong learning alongside our students.

Many thanks for sharing your time and talents with us,

Kellie McGowan
Director of Adult Education
Metro South Adult Basic Education

“Although I’ve spent most of my adult life as a newspaper reporter and fiction writer, tutoring has given me the opportunity to tangle with the intricate and mystifying machinery of our wonderful language in ways I never would have imagined. It’s intoxicating. I have my terrific students to thank for that.”

Norm D. Metro South Volunteer since 2017

Benefits of Volunteering

Professional Experience: If you are taking time to be at home with your family, thinking of a career change, or wanting practical knowledge in education, this is a great opportunity for you! Volunteer experience is impressive on job applications and resumes. It is an excellent way to gain and develop new skills, or try out a new career potential. We are more than happy to provide references, letters of recommendation, and letters to current employers to acknowledge your contribution and dedication to our students and program.

Personal Experience: As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to meet people from around the world and learn about those cultures, help people adjust to living in the United States, use your creativity in meeting the needs of students, and learn more about the literacy community and education. The greatest reward is knowing you are making a difference in the lives of our students.

Tax Deductions: Some of your out-of-pocket expenses connected with volunteering may be deductible when you file your income tax. Consult with your tax advisor concerning your personal tax situation to see what may apply.

Metro South Adult Basic Education Mission Statement

Supporting the efforts of all adults who wish to improve their lives through literacy, education, career development, and lifelong learning.

At Metro South Volunteers, we celebrate diversity and respects the rights and liberty of each individual to practice their own religion and political beliefs.



Position Descriptions

Collaborative ESL/ELL Volunteer Teacher/Tutor

We have Collaborative Partnerships located in Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield. These classes are volunteer lead with the support of Metro South ABE Staff.

Purpose of Position: ESL/ELL Volunteer: Provide assistance to learners in communicating in the English language in a comfortable, one-to-one or small group learning environment. The central focus is on functional aspects of language use, including topics such as reading comprehension, writing, grammar and conversation skills. An important aspect is helping learners adjust to and understand US culture and society.

Training: Attend Literacy Minnesota's 12-hour Foundations of Adult Education Training. ***This training is not required if you have a current teaching license or if you have tutored 400 hours in another program.*** In addition to the 12 hour training, volunteers must attend or obtain 2 hours of training annually.

Time Commitment: Ideally we ask that volunteers commit to a minimum of six months with Metro South. Collaborative classes meet twice a week for 2 hours. Volunteers generally teach one or both classes each week and also spend time lesson planning and preparing in addition to the class time.

Responsibilities:

- Be dependable. Students, staff and other volunteers count on you.
- If you are going to be absent, contact the Metro South Volunteer Liaison and students (depending on site policies) as soon as possible.
- Record your volunteer hours and student contact hours on the site attendance sheet.
- Keep a record of lesson plans and student work.
- Prepare each lesson to meet the individual goals and needs of the learner.
- Carefully listen to your learner and offer encouragement and support.
- Assign manageable tasks and provide positive feedback.
- Identify the learners' interest areas and integrate related material into lessons.
- Follow the methods and teaching techniques demonstrated in the tutor training.

- Inform the Metro South Volunteer Liaison or the Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator promptly of any problems encountered in the tutoring situation.
- If your volunteer placement does not prove to be what you expected or if you decide to end your placement, please notify Metro South Volunteers staff.
- Personal injuries occurred while volunteering must be reported immediately to the supervising staff and to Metro South Volunteers staff.

Supervisor: Metro South Volunteer Liaison and/or Metro South Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator.

“(The volunteers) are so patient and good teachers. They explain very well. They help me with communication.”

Leticia, Student at the Central Collaborative site in Richfield (2023)

ESL/ELL, GED or Adult Diploma Classroom Assistant

Tutoring Sites: Metro South Adult Basic Education classroom at the Community Education Campus (CEC) and Metro South Adult Basic Education classroom in Eden Prairie at the Hennepin Technical College (HTC).

Purpose of Position: To provide assistance to a Metro South ABE instructor in providing basic skills and English instruction in a classroom setting. Tutors may work as a general assistant, focus on specific topics such as writing, work one-to-one with a student, or assist in other enrichment opportunities listed below. The instructor will provide support and materials for tutors. Classroom assistants may help with computer, language, and math skills as requested by the teacher and students.

There are several volunteer tutoring opportunities:

- Computer Lab Tutor – Volunteers should have basic knowledge of software use, keyboarding, Microsoft Word, navigating the Internet and implementing District policies in use of computers.

- Math Tutor – Volunteers need to feel comfortable explaining and demonstrating math concepts using several approaches.
- Conversation + Pronunciation Circles – Work with small groups of students to help practice conversational skills and pronunciation.
- Help Room Tutor – Volunteers would need to feel comfortable explaining concepts in a wide variety of subject areas; i.e. math, science, social studies, writing, etc.
- Reading Lab Tutor – Volunteers would need to feel comfortable explaining basic grammar concepts as well as reading comprehension strategies.
- Resume Writing/Career Resources – Volunteers help students write and review resumes, cover letters, and walk through online application forms and more.

Training: In the first 6-12 months of service, volunteers are required to complete Literacy Minnesota's 4-hour Foundations Training series. These trainings are pre-recorded webinars that can be completed anytime. Additional site and classroom training will be provided by Metro South staff. After your first year, two hours of additional training is required annually.

Time Commitment: Tutors should commit to volunteering at least 1 hour per week. Timing varies by role and classroom need.

Responsibilities:

- Be dependable. Students, staff, and other volunteers are counting on you.
 - Wear your nametag while volunteering.
 - If you are going to be absent, contact Metro South Volunteers or the classroom teacher as soon as possible.
 - Work cooperatively with the teacher to determine lesson content and approaches.
 - Carefully listen to your learners and offer encouragement and support. Ask for help when you need it.
 - Inform Metro South Volunteers promptly of any problems encountered.
 - If your volunteer placement does not prove to be what you expected or if you decide to end your placement, please notify Metro South Volunteers staff.
 - Personal injuries occurred while volunteering must be reported immediately to the supervising staff and to Metro South Volunteers staff.
 - Report any potential safety issues you may observe to supervising staff.

Supervisor: Classroom Teacher and/or Metro South Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator.

Volunteer Policies and Guidelines

Accept Direction

Accept direction and supervision. Ask for feedback and support when it is needed.

Appearance

As representatives of the School District, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to students and to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties, including regard to personal hygiene. We have students and staff in the District with fragrance allergies. Their reactions can be mild to severe. Please be cautious in your use of perfumes, colognes, and lotions.

Communications

Keep good communication with staff, site contact, and other volunteers. Any question is a good question – be sure to ask! Make every effort to arrange a time to talk with the teacher outside of class when there are problems or questions.

Confidentiality

Information regarding our students is confidential. The School District is regulated by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which includes the following:

1. No information can be shared regarding a student, without the written and witnessed signed consent of the adult student or underage student's parent or guardian.
2. Discussing personal information, regarding an adult student or underage student will be cause for disciplinary action and/or lead to termination of the volunteer.

Confidentiality is important to the integrity of our program. It is important to respect the privacy of all students, staff and other volunteers. To respect the confidentiality of your students, do not bring guests with you while volunteering. If you have safety concerns regarding information a student has shared with you, please contact your supervisor.

Cultural Awareness

Our communities are culturally diverse. It is important that we work with one another positively and be aware of cultural differences. Keep these things in mind as you volunteer:

- respect and learn from each other
- reject unfair stereotypes
- value differences
- work on bridging cultural gaps
- find common ground
- keep an open mind

Please understand Metro South ABE students, staff, and volunteers practice and hold diverse religious and/or political beliefs. During your volunteer time, please refrain from proselytizing or endorsing political candidates or issues.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Metro South Volunteers does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, physical appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, or disability.

Student Contact

As a volunteer, you will meet many students and form working relationships with them. However, volunteers should not have contact with student(s) outside of their volunteer assignment. In addition, when working with students, whether individually or in small groups, we require those meetings be held on school grounds. This is not only for the protection of the students but volunteers as well.

Transportation

Transportation of a student by a volunteer in a vehicle or the transportation of a volunteer by a student in a vehicle is not allowed for any reason. Do not give or accept rides for any reason.

“After two months of school I see my progress in understanding and speaking English. Lessons have been going in an interesting way, they're never boring. We work a lot on our American pronunciation together with teacher and volunteers. I feel myself more confident now. Our classrooms are very comfortable, clean, spacious and always with clean air. I really enjoy studying here.”

Tatiana D. ESL student (2023)

Volunteer Dismissal Policy

A volunteer may be dismissed for misrepresenting their qualifications, not completing required training, not complying with stated responsibilities, and/or disregarding volunteer policies.

- Complaints or grievances regarding a tutor should be presented in writing to the Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator.
- The Coordinator will provide dated documentation of volunteer infraction(s).
- The volunteer will meet with the Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator to discuss infraction(s).
- The Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator and volunteer will develop a plan with a time frame to remedy the situation.
- If the infraction(s) continue(s) after the designated date of compliance, the Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator will proceed with the dismissal of the volunteer.

School District Policies

[Bloomington Public Schools Policies](#)

As a Metro South volunteer it is your responsibility to read, understand, and comply with all School Board Policies. Contact the Volunteer + Outreach Coordinator or site supervisor if you have any questions. Volunteers are required to observe and comply with all school policies including:

Policy 413: Harassment and Violence

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. This is a mandatory policy, and should be updated annually to reflect changing Federal and State laws.

Policy 414: Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse

The purpose of this policy and accompanying regulation is to make clear statutory requirements and District procedures for reporting suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse.

Policy 415: Mandated Reporting of Suspected Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults

To ensure the required reporting of suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults. When school personnel know or have reason to believe a vulnerable adult is being maltreated, the school personnel must immediately report their knowledge or belief.

Policy 417: Chemical Use and Abuse

ISD #271 recognizes that chemical use and abuse constitutes a grave threat to the physical and mental well-being of students and employees and significantly impedes the learning process. Chemical use and abuse also creates significant problems for society in general. ISD #271 believes that the public school has a role in education, intervention, and prevention of chemical use and abuse. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal to prevent chemical use and abuse by providing procedures for education and intervention.

Policy 418/419: Drug Free Workplace/Drug Free School and Tobacco Free Environment

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe and healthful environment for employees and students by prohibiting the use of alcohol, toxic substances and controlled substances without a physician's prescription. The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is drug and tobacco free.

Policy 423: Staff - Student Relationships

To maintain an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. District staff is to provide students with appropriate guidance, understanding, and direction while maintaining a standard of professionalism and acting within accepted standards of conduct.

Policy 457: Respectful and Professional Workplace

To ensure employees are not subjected to disrespectful and unprofessional behavior, threats or acts of physical or verbal harassment, violence or harm or disruptive conduct that causes others to feel unsafe.

Policy 501: Weapon Free Schools

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public.

Policy 506: Student Discipline

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are aware of and comply with ISD # 271 expectations for student conduct. Such compliance will enhance the school

district's ability to maintain discipline and ensure that there is no interference with the educational process. The school district will take appropriate disciplinary action when students fail to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct established by this policy.

Policy 514: Bullying Prohibition

To ensure a system is in place to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, reprisal, retaliation, and other similar disruptive and detrimental behavior.

Policy 515: Protection and Privacy of Student Records

To collect, maintain and disseminate pupil records and protect the privacy rights of students as provided in federal law and state statutes.

Policy 524: Social Media Guidelines for Metro South Staff - Internet Acceptable Use and Safety

The Internet, district computer networks and computer workstations must be used responsibly, ethically and legally. Failure to adhere to district policies, regulations and guidelines for the use of computers, networks and the Internet will result in a revocation of access privileges. The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate access to the district computer network and acceptable and safe use of the Internet, including electronic communications.

Policy 540: Hazing Prohibition

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times.

Policy 609: Religion in the Schools

To identify the status of religion in the curriculum, environment and calendar of Bloomington Public Schools.

Policy 903: Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites

To inform the school community and the general public of the position of the School Board on visitors to school buildings and other school property.

Policy 906: Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in education as they help to individualize instruction, promote school/community interaction, support school activities and events, provide multigenerational and multi-cultural experiences, and enrich curriculum for all learners.

Thank you so much for taking the time to acquaint yourself with our policies and procedures. We appreciate your support and dedication which allows us to deliver excellent programming.



Let's connect!

If you are on any of the following platforms, please consider connecting with us to stay in touch and help spread the word about our program. Scan the QR code with your phone or search for Metro South ABE.



“I'm a volunteer. I love it. It gives me joy. These students are so determined and resilient. They're grateful. And the teacher (Dale) has such a good way with them. I feel privileged. I often think about how the students with so many linguistic and cultural backgrounds so readily reach out to each other in support and friendship. The human village right here!”

Greg O. Metro South volunteer since 2020