



ICAN

IRVINGTON COMMUNITY  
ADVOCACY NETWORK

# ICAN Volunteer Onboarding Guide

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## Welcome to ICAN!

Thank you for joining the Irvington Community Advocacy Network. Your time, energy, and compassion are essential to our mission of addressing poverty, food insecurity, and inequity on the Eastside of Indianapolis. You are now part of a neighbor-powered network working to make meaningful change—one person at a time.

## ICAN's Mission

ICAN empowers neighbors through direct services, advocacy, and partnerships that promote dignity, equity, and access to basic needs.

## Volunteers Accessing Services

At ICAN, we recognize that some of our volunteers may also be experiencing challenges related to food access, housing, or other basic needs. We deeply value every member of our community, and we want you to know that **volunteers are welcome to access the ICAN Food Pantry and Assistance Center services** when needed.

To ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability, we ask that volunteers who wish to participate in programs as clients follow these guidelines:

- **Speak with the Executive Director or Pantry Director in advance.** This allows us to support your needs while maintaining clear records and boundaries.
- **Please wait until the end of the pantry or Assistance Center hours before selecting items for yourself.** This ensures all neighbors are served equitably and inventory can be assessed accurately.
- **Do not take items without communicating with a staff member.** ICAN relies on strict inventory tracking for grant compliance, equitable distribution, and food safety. Taking food or supplies without documentation compromises this system and violates our shared trust.



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We are committed to dignity and inclusion in all we do. If you are in need, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out—we will always do our best to support you with respect and care.

## **Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Scheduling Process**

ICAN offers two scheduling options to help accommodate availability & provide consistent support for ICAN programs:

- Rotating schedule (bi-monthly or monthly)
- Weekly commitment

### **Call-out Process**

If you are unable to make your scheduled shift, please contact [REDACTED]

### **Volunteer Recruitment & “Buddy System”**

ICAN is developing a robust volunteer recruitment plan to help support our Assistance Center and Food Pantry programs. Current volunteers are critical in helping us welcome new members into our community and ensuring they represent ICAN values and further our mission to be a welcoming space for everyone in the community. As new volunteers join us, current volunteers will be asked to mentor and support new members to ensure they have a positive experience. The buddy system ensures training at each station is consistent and allows for volunteers to learn multiple tasks to cover shifts as-needed.

## **Volunteer Positions**



### **ICAN Food Pantry – Director of the Day**

- Thursdays, 11:30AM–3:15 PM
- Serves once per month on a rotating schedule.
- Ideal for experienced volunteers with strong organizational and leadership skills.  
Key Responsibilities include:
  - Process and inspect food donations upon arrival
  - Label expiration dates and rotate inventory accordingly
  - Ensure all volunteer stations are stocked and equipped
  - Oversee readiness of food bags for unhoused neighbors
  - Support shopping guests and manage flow in the shopping area



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- Respond to guest questions and minor concerns; escalate to the Food Pantry Director as needed
- Ensure refrigerators and stored food are kept at proper temperatures and record temperatures per health department guidelines
- Maintain food safety and cleanliness standards throughout the shift
- Manage shopping area and entrance doorway if visitors are allowed in early due to inclement weather

#### **Food Pantry – Second Helpings Fulfillment Volunteer**

- Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 PM
- Weekly or bi-monthly
- Must have SUV or pickup truck and be able to lift up to 30 lbs
- Responsibilities:
  - Check food pantry fridge inventory and create produce list
  - Pick up fresh produce from Second Helpings
  - Deliver and reorganize in food pantry fridges
  - Verify fridge temps before leaving

#### **Food Pantry – Stock Room & Break Down Volunteer**

- Thursdays, 12:00–3:00 PM
- Weekly or bi-monthly
- Must be able to lift up to 30 lbs
- Responsibilities:
  - Process pantry intake items
  - Label expiration dates on food boxes
  - Organize inventory by date
  - Break down boxes and store equipment
  - Assist break-down of tables and chairs

#### **Food Pantry – General Volunteer**

- Thursdays, 12:30–3:00 PM
- Responsibilities:
  - Manage a distribution table
  - Rotate and cross train on different stations
  - Assist shoppers with bags as needed
  - Check for expired items
  - Stock and prep your station



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#### **Clothing Closet – Fulfillment Volunteer**

- Flexible schedule
- Responsibilities:
  - Process donated items
  - Assemble order bags
  - Maintain organization system

#### **Clothing Closet – Assistant Volunteer**

- Tuesdays, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM (during AC hours)
- Responsibilities:
  - Maintain organization system
  - Provide customer service to visitors

#### **Assistance Center (AC) – Coordinator Volunteer**

- Flexible schedule
- Responsibilities:
  - Support Executive Director
  - Coordinate volunteer schedules
  - Help with outreach, newsletters, and general tasks
  - Must be able to lift up to 30 lbs

## **Inclusive Culture Practices**

ICAN is committed to creating a welcoming space where everyone feels valued and safe. As a volunteer, we ask that you:

- Use inclusive, person-first language. Person-first language treats individuals with respect and dignity, recognizing that their current situation is just one aspect of their lives.
  - Person-first language emphasizes the person before the disability, for example “person who is blind” or “people with spinal cord injuries.” Person-first language when discussing homelessness involves referring to individuals as “people experiencing homelessness” or “people without housing” instead of “homeless people” or “the homeless”. This approach emphasizes the individual and their lived experiences, rather than defining them solely by their housing status. It acknowledges that homelessness is a temporary situation that can be overcome with the right support.
- Refrain from commenting on a neighbor’s appearance, clothing, or hygiene. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of personal circumstance.
- Be aware of biases and listen actively. Speak up for equity and dignity in all interactions
- Ask questions—curiosity and growth are always encouraged



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### ❤️ Trauma-Informed Volunteer Practices

- Understand that many neighbors may be living with mental illness, emotional trauma, addiction or are in acute crisis. Approach each interaction with empathy and without judgment.
- Remain calm, patient, and respectful. Do not take difficult behavior personally.
- Use grounding language like “You’re safe here,” “I’m here to help,” or “Take your time.”
- If a situation becomes overwhelming or feels unsafe, step away and notify the ICAN director or DOD immediately.

### 🙏 Inclusive Spiritual Reflection Practice

At ICAN, we recognize that people come from diverse spiritual, cultural, and personal backgrounds. In keeping with our commitment to inclusivity, equity, and community care, we offer optional moments of reflection or prayer at certain staff gatherings or volunteer meetings.

These moments are intended to be **inclusive, non-denominational**, and respectful of all belief systems—including those who do not follow a religious or spiritual tradition.

#### Our Practice:

- Any prayer or reflection offered should use inclusive, universal language. For example, speakers may invite the group to “pause for a moment of gratitude, reflection, or silent intention.”
- Individuals leading reflections are encouraged to avoid language specific to one faith tradition (e.g., referencing a particular deity or religious text) and instead focus on themes such as **hope, compassion, justice, unity, or service**.
- Participation is always optional. We honor everyone's right to engage in a way that is authentic for them—whether that means joining in silently, offering their own form of prayer, or simply taking a quiet moment.
- **To ensure all community members feel welcome and unpressured, prayer and reflection practices should only take place in staff rooms or designated internal spaces—not in public service areas where visitors may feel obligated to participate.**



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- Volunteers are encouraged to be mindful of others' beliefs, and to refrain from pressuring anyone to participate or explaining their personal beliefs unless invited in conversation.

**Sample Inclusive Invitation:**

“Before we begin, we invite you to take a moment to pause—in prayer, reflection, or quiet gratitude—for the work we’re doing together in this community. May we move forward with compassion, respect, and care for one another.”

**What You Can Expect From ICAN**

- A supportive and community-centered environment
- Shared power and responsibilities to support ICAN mission
- Opportunities to represent ICAN at community events & fundraising
- Training and guidance tailored to your role
- Transparent communication and feedback is always welcome
- Opportunities to grow, learn, and lead

**Questions or Ready to Sign Up?**

Contact: Kari Burns, Executive Director

Email: [icancenterirvington@gmail.com](mailto:icancenterirvington@gmail.com), Phone: 317-322-9645

Thank you for showing up for your neighbors. You are making a difference!



# ICAN Volunteer Code of Ethics

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As a volunteer with the Irvington Community Advocacy Network (ICAN), I understand that I am representing a community-centered organization built on trust, inclusive practices, equity, and neighbor-led service. I agree to uphold the following ethical principles during my service.

## Ethical Commitments

- I will treat all neighbors, volunteers, and staff with dignity, empathy, and respect.
- I will actively contribute to an inclusive and judgment-free space where all individuals feel safe and valued.
- I will not take food or items from ICAN programs without prior approval and proper documentation.
- I will follow all procedures regarding inventory, donation intake, and client confidentiality.
- I will communicate openly, ask questions when unsure, and seek guidance when needed.
- I will notify ICAN in a timely manner if I will miss a scheduled shift.
- I will respect ICAN's trauma-informed approach by being mindful of how I interact with others and honor their boundaries.
- I will ensure all ICAN spaces and events are welcoming and safe spaces for all people regardless of race, gender, identity, income, ability, age, or personal beliefs.
- I will be honest, accountable, and uphold the responsibilities of my volunteer role to the best of my ability.

I have completed volunteer onboarding and understand the expectations of service at ICAN. By signing below, I agree to uphold ICAN's values and participate in a culture of inclusion, equity, and mutual care.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_