



**Uniting Cultures to Celebrate the  
Mosaic of our Community**

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106 E. Kiowa Ave, Fort Morgan, CO 80701

# Volunteer Handbook

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Uniting Cultures to Celebrate the  
Mosaic of our Community

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Dear Volunteer(s),

Thank you very much for choosing to volunteer with OneMorgan County (OMC). OMC is pleased to welcome you to our team of volunteers. We believe volunteers are the front line in achieving our goals for the community and OMC depends on you as community connectors, mentors, and friends to help strengthen Morgan County. Morgan County is a diverse community. We need your help to encourage intercultural connections in order for people to learn from each other and ultimately develop and support the community's social, educational, economic, health, cultural, and recreational needs. OMC's programs would not be possible without volunteers like you who want to work towards a stronger, cohesive Morgan County. This packet was created to provide you with additional information about our organization and includes details about the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Executive Director Michaela J. Holdridge at 970-370-2990 or [immigrantintegration@onemorgancounty.org](mailto:immigrantintegration@onemorgancounty.org). Again, welcome and thank you!

Sincerely,

Wayfinders.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can change the world;  
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”  
~Margaret Mead

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>WELCOME LETTER.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHO WE ARE &amp; WHAT WE DO.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>BENEFITS OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VOLUNTEER INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CURRENT PROGRAMS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>OMC POLICY OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## **PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK**

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This handbook was put together for you to help you as you begin volunteering. This book will provide a brief history of OMC, an explanation of our programs including Wayfinders' Endeavor, and other helpful information such as office location.

We have done our best to provide you with as much information as possible, however, there is still much you may want to know as you start the volunteer process. As such, OMC holds volunteer training sessions as new volunteers join which will provide you with more information.

As a volunteer-based organization, we depend on you. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions at any time during your training or volunteering. We do ask that you read this handbook carefully and refer to it first when any questions do arise. We also suggest that you keep this handbook with you during your volunteering activities as a reference.

## WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

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### **OMC MISSION**

*OneMorgan County fosters relationships among diverse people and organizations to strengthen the well-being, safety, and cohesive nature of our community*

### **OMC VISION**

We celebrate a vibrant and thriving community enriched by meaningful relationships built through trust, friendship, and cultural exchange.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND**

OneMorgan County (OMC), an award-winning non-profit organization, fosters community cohesion in Morgan County—a predominantly rural area in eastern Colorado. OMC started in 2005, part of a volunteer-based community initiative, spearheaded by Morgan Community College Adult Basic Education staff, to address a long-standing disconnect between the community's established residents and immigrant population. A disconnect that was due, in large part, to a lack of cultural understanding and distinct differences in languages, cultures, and religions. Following months of studied planning and collaboration with diverse community stakeholders, OMC received financial support from a Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families Initiative (SIRFI) grant of The Colorado Trust to develop a plan to support immigrant integration in Morgan County. With technical assistance from Denver's Spring Institute of Intercultural Relations, fiscal oversight from Morgan Community College, and guidance from a volunteer advisory council, among others, OMC developed an approach to immigrant integration, based on building trust, shared values, and common experiences to bridge cultural, religious, language, and social differences, resulting in a thriving, cohesive environment. In 2009, OMC transitioned to an independent non-profit organization.

Interestingly, the story of Morgan County's demographics is rooted in its strong agri-business sector which, since the late 1890s, has been drawing immigrant laborers, familiar with rural and small town living, to work in physically demanding, unskilled jobs that, historically, have not required English language proficiency. In 2005, for example, the city of Fort Morgan became a secondary migration area for the resettlement of Somali refugees to work at Cargill's Meat

Solutions processing plant. By the end of 2013, over 1,000 Somali refugees had resettled to Fort Morgan, joined by refugees from other east African countries. (According to U.S. Census 2013 estimates, Morgan County, with a population of about 28,400, ranks 6<sup>th</sup> highest among the state's 64 counties for the number of foreign born, at 12.6%. Further, approximately 26.5% of the population speaks a primary language other than English.)

Over the past several years, Morgan County's increasingly diverse population led to a corresponding need for community cohesion initiatives, which OMC provides through its programs. For OMC, community cohesion initiatives contribute to the overall climate of inclusiveness in Morgan County, and demonstrate that there are mechanisms for decreasing barriers to productive intercultural interaction, such as opportunities for positive dialogue, relationship-building, intercultural communication skills training, and access to accurate information and services. It is OMC's belief that as barriers are identified solutions can be developed!

## **BENEFITS OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER FOR ONEMORGAN COUNTY**

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There are many motivations for becoming a volunteer with OMC. Some may include:

- Share skills and learn new ones
- Explore new opportunities
- Help someone
- Give back to the community
- Get to know the community better
- Meet new people/ make new friends
- Set an example for youth
- Act on your passion

### **DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS**

Volunteering with OMC through Wayfinders' Endeavor presents a unique opportunity to develop many new skills. Everyone in a community brings a unique knowledge and skill-set and sharing these is a great way for members of Morgan County to connect, learn, and teach. Morgan County is a special place in that it is full of diversity and many talents. The skills that the community members of Morgan County possess are important to this community. Thus, Wayfinders' Endeavor works to support the community by connecting and helping people develop life skills in the process. These things not only will help our members to grow personally, but they will also strengthen Morgan County as a whole.

### **STRENGTHEN YOUR COMMUNITY**

Our sub-programs in Wayfinders' Endeavor are centered on community engagement: OMC is a resource where people can feel a sense of belonging in the community. OMC's directive is to begin organizing programs that will strengthen Morgan County, thus the goal is to create a safer and a more tightly knit community as a whole. OMC and our program, Wayfinders' Endeavor, will work to bring isolated members of the community to core members in order to foster an environment where everyone feels connected and valued. OMC believes that each individual of the community has unique knowledge and skill-set to offer and that by connecting all peoples of Morgan County through Wayfinders' Endeavor everyone in the community will benefit.

### **EARN CSU RECOGNITION**

In return of your effort and time spent helping OneMorgan County with its goals, Colorado State University would like to recognize you and award you with a certificate. This recognition for your community building efforts would not only be useful to use in resumes, but it would also be

beneficial to high school students seeking higher education at Colorado State or any other universities.

### **HELP MAKE FORT MORGAN A MODEL FOR INTERCULTURALISM**

Fort Morgan has already received national attention for its work in interculturalism. There are many more opportunities for Fort Morgan to be recognized as a leading and groundbreaking community in America. As Fort Morgan continues to work on a healthier and stronger community making connections between different ages, genders, ethnicities, and abilities it will be awarded and looked at as a role model for the rest of rural America. This can only be possible however with volunteers, and the volunteers involved will be the ones recognized.

### **ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES**

Past volunteers avow they gained more through the experience of volunteering than they expected. We will work hard so that your experiences with us will be just as fulfilling as past volunteers.

### **VOLUNTEER VALUE**

Although it is tough to place a monetary value on volunteer work, the Independent Sector.org has calculated the dollar value estimated for an hour of volunteer work. For Colorado, this value is currently \$25.68. Your volunteer work saves OneMorgan County thousands and helps to keep our programs up and running. It is important to keep track of your hours so OMC can figure your estimated in-kind contribution throughout your time as a volunteer with us.

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

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As a volunteer with OMC, you have certain rights and responsibilities. These can be found in greater detail in the Volunteer Agreement.

### **As a volunteer with OMC, you have the rights to:**

- To be provided with volunteer orientation and training
- To be provided information on the organization and its programs
- To work in a healthy and safe environment
- To be given accurate information regarding your volunteerism
- To have your personal information confidential and dealt with according to principles stated in the volunteer agreement

### **As a volunteer, you have the responsibility to:**

- Be reliable and respectful to the program participants and other volunteers
- Abide by OMC's Policies and Procedures
- Fulfill volunteer duties as agreed upon
- Undergo volunteer orientation/training
- Attend organizational volunteer meetings as often as possible
- Ask for support when needed
- Inform the organization of any concerns or issues that arise
- Provide adequate notice of intent to stop volunteering
- Be a contributing member of OMC

## CURRENT PROGRAMS

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### ① WAYFINDERS' ENDEAVOR

OMC sponsors collaborations between diverse groups in the community. OMC links volunteers with program participants for one-on-one mentoring in a variety of areas. WE includes community activities for relationship-building among Fort Morgan residents.

#### **TIME REQUIREMENTS**

Volunteers will be expected to commit at least three hours each month. However, the more time you give, the more successful your experience will be at Wayfinders' Endeavor. The time and date you volunteer will be up to each individual schedule.

Volunteers will independently keep track of volunteer hours and will be responsible for reporting hours to OMC each month.

#### **TRAININGS/ ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS**

In order to have effective volunteers, OMC holds mandatory orientation training. Orientation will discuss OMC's policies and procedures as well as the basics of what to expect as a volunteer.

OMC also holds monthly meetings with volunteers to ensure their satisfaction with the program and offer advice for any concerns that arise. These meetings will alter between one-on-one to group support meetings.

#### **MEETING PLACE**

Meeting areas will be at the Fort Morgan library or the OneMorgan County office, however if it is more convenient for volunteers to have a specific meeting location that can be arranged.

#### **EVALUATIONS**

Program evaluations are key to finding out what we are doing well and what needs to be improved on. Evaluations of the participant will be necessary to gage their progress in our programs helping us with program development and volunteer evaluations will assist OMC with program structure. We will need your assistance in conducting these evaluations throughout your time volunteering with us.

## **PLACEMENT WITH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

Volunteers will be matched with program participants based on assessment of preferences and availability. In cases of vulnerable program members such as youth, additional procedures, such as background checks, may be necessary. Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct background checks in these cases will not be placed with program members.

## **② CITIZENSHIP PATHWAY RESOURCES**

OMC offers low-cost citizenship classes and credible information on immigration-related topics. Quarterly classes help immigrants file naturalization applications, practice for naturalization interviews, and prepare for the citizenship test. (Enrollment averages about 10 participants per class).

### **TIME REQUIREMENTS**

Citizenship classes run for 10 (ten) weeks at 2 (two) hours each class. They typically are scheduled on a Saturday in the morning (be sure to ask about current class dates & times if interested in volunteering). Volunteers may commit to as little or as much time as they would like. Volunteers will independently keep track of volunteer hours and will be responsible for reporting hours to OMC each month.

### **MEETING PLACE**

Citizenship classes are typically held at the Immigrant Law Center of Northeast Colorado in the conference room (be sure to ask about current class location if interested in volunteering).

## **③ INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FEST**

IMF provides opportunities for cultural exchange, bringing the community together to enjoy food and music from around the world, and helps build community relations through social interaction and shared experiences.

### **TIME REQUIREMENTS**

International Music Fest is typically held on a Saturday in April, and lasts roughly 4 (four) hours. Volunteers may commit as little or as much time as they would like.

## **TRAININGS/ ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS**

The IMF committee begins meeting in January to plan the year's IMF. Meetings are typically held once a week at a scheduled day and time (ask about current IMF scheduled meetings if you are interested in volunteering on the IMF planning committee).

## **MEETING PLACE**

The international Music Fest is typically held at the Fort Morgan High School. Committee meetings are typically held in OMC's conference room (be sure to ask about current locations if interested in volunteering).

## **④ CULTURAL CONNECTIONS**

OMC fosters relationship-building and opportunities for positive dialogue in the community. Activities, sponsored by OMC and community partners, include an annual Community Potluck with students from Regis University's Intercultural Immersion Program and local community service projects with students from Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp. The program also sponsors community workshops, presentations, and small-group discussions. In 2014, OMC provided an intercultural communication workshop for billing staff of Fort Morgan Utilities to facilitate positive customer service with residents. OMC also launched a series of "Community Safety through Education" presentations on topics of interest to the community.

## **TIME REQUIREMENTS**

These events are scheduled on a continuous basis. If you are interested in volunteering for a Cultural Connection event, please contact our office for current/upcoming events.

## **OMC POLICY OVERVIEW**

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### **ANTI DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

OMC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate based upon race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, military obligations, gender expression, gender identity, or any status protected by state and local law. This policy reflects OMC's fundamental commitment to fair employment.

This policy of Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all policies and procedures relating to recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotions, training, opportunities for advancement, benefits, termination, selection of contractors and consultants, and all other terms and conditions of employment, along with dealings with the general public and OMC's members.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Remember that when you are volunteering for Wayfinders' Endeavor, you are representing not only yourself, but also OMC and the Fort Morgan community as a whole. With that in mind, be sure to maintain a professional and equal relationship with those involved in the program.

Remember, Wayfinders' Endeavor is a program working to tighten the Fort Morgan community and encourage belonging for new members of the community.

### **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is the act of making unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks towards someone else in the workplace or any social setting. Sexual assault is considered any form of unwanted sexual act perpetrated towards a person against their will. It is also considered sexual assault if that person is not capable of giving consent— inability to give consent under Colorado State law is when a person is under the influence of drugs/alcohol, is coerced, threatened, or pressured. Harassment includes any verbal, physical, emotional, visual, or action that may be based on, but not limited to, their class, gender, sex, ethnicity, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

OMC is dedicated to insure that all of their employees, members, and volunteers have a safe and comfortable work environment. If there is a complaint from a volunteer or a participant in Wayfinders' Endeavor, including discrimination or harassment of any kind, it will be addressed and handled by OMC.

## **INCLUSIVENESS PHILOSOPHY**

Inclusiveness is at the heart of OMC's mission. It represents our aspiration and our intent. Further, OMC's commitment to inclusivity accounts for differences with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic background, gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability.

OMC cultivates inclusiveness by promoting an environment that is welcoming and affirming—one where everyone who is involved with the organization, in any way, feels included, respected, and embraced. For example, OMC: (1) recruits volunteers of all ages and backgrounds; (2) creates and implements programs and events, applying its awareness of cultural differences; (3) ensures that programs and events are accessible and open to the public; and (4) provides information on its website in 3 languages (English, Spanish, and Somali). In addition, OMC encourages community participation at all levels, welcoming open dialogue and alternative perspectives; mindful, that respecting the values and perspectives of others, without passing judgment, helps foster inclusiveness. Given the nature of our mission, OMC recognizes the value of building a sense of acceptance and belonging among people, based on trust, shared values, and common experiences.

## **CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

Cultural competency is the understanding that every person is made up of several identities with different and valuable experiences. With this understanding, cultural competency creates the ability to positively interact with people different from their own identity. An example would be an older person working with a younger person and listening to try and understand their experience without judgment. It could also be two people of different nationalities or religions working to validate and understand the importance of each experience while learning from the differences. When working to be a culturally competent person, you must first work to be honest with yourself and how you react to difference. When one is able to acknowledge that they have cultural bias, as everyone does, then they have the ability to work and understand those biases when interacting with difference. Another step in achieving cultural competency is to learn what types of communication are appropriate when interacting with people of different backgrounds. Understanding this element will help you be respectful by using current or appropriate language. Having a desire to work on cultural competency is an essential part of becoming an asset to

OneMorgan County. While becoming culturally competent can take time and practice, OMC will support their volunteers on the development of their intercultural skills, fostering an open mind and heart to difference.

### **VOLUNTEER CONTACT INFORMATION**

It is the volunteers' responsibility to provide OMC with up to date and accurate contact information. Any updates can be made by contacting the Executive Director.

### **RESIGNATION**

If you wish to resign for any reason you are free to do so, however, it would be considerate to notify the volunteer coordinator at least two weeks in advance.

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ONEMORGAN COUNTY

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### **Contact numbers**

#### **Phone**

970-370-2990

#### **Email**

[immigrantintegration@onemorgancounty.org](mailto:immigrantintegration@onemorgancounty.org)

#### **Website**

[www.onemorgancounty.org](http://www.onemorgancounty.org)

#### **Mail**

106 E. Kiowa Ave.  
Fort Morgan, CO 80701

#### **Contact Person**

Michaela J. Holdridge, Executive Director

Please feel free to contact OMC for any further information.