

## **Brattleboro Food Co-op Volunteer Eligibility Policy for Former Employees**

### **Purpose:**

The Brattleboro Food Co-op is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all employees, volunteers, and members. To uphold these values, we have established guidelines regarding the eligibility of former employees to volunteer in-store or through our partner organizations.

### **Eligibility for Volunteer Service by Former Employees**

Former employees of the Co-op who have not been terminated for serious misconduct are eligible to participate in volunteer opportunities, both in-store and with partner organizations. This includes volunteering within Co-op operations or contributing to community outreach efforts.

### **Exclusion for Individuals Terminated for Serious Misconduct**

Former employees terminated for serious misconduct are not eligible to volunteer in-store at the Co-op but may still participate in partner volunteer work through our **Commitment to Community** program. This policy is designed to protect the integrity of the Co-op and ensure the well-being of our community and staff.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals who were employed by the Brattleboro Food Co-op and who have been terminated for serious misconduct. It specifically addresses eligibility to volunteer within the Co-op and sets guidelines for determining serious offenses that lead to ineligibility for in-store volunteer hours.

### **Policy Statement**

Employees terminated for serious misconduct are not eligible to volunteer in-store at the Brattleboro Food Co-op.

**Serious misconduct includes, but is not limited to:**

- **Acts or threats of violence** (physical, verbal, written, or otherwise)
- **Theft or unauthorized use** of equipment, products, funds, or time, including documented incidents
- **Misrepresentation of hours worked.**
- **Refusal to observe written policies and procedures** or failure to follow reasonable direction from the Employer
- **Acts of discrimination or harassment**
- **Rudeness to customers** or behavior resulting in excessive customer complaints
- **Reporting to work or conducting business-related activities under the influence**, in possession of, or selling/distributing alcohol or illegal drugs
- **Unauthorized release of information**

Employees terminated for any of the above or similar reasons are ineligible to volunteer in-store at the Co-op. However, they may still participate in partner volunteer work through the Co-op's **Commitment to Community** program.

**References:**

Please refer to the Union Contract and Employee Handbook for further details and guidance on this policy.

**Rationale**

This policy is in place to:

- **Maintain a Safe Environment:** The safety and well-being of Co-op staff, volunteers, and members is our top priority. Individuals who have engaged in serious misconduct may pose a risk to the community and staff.
- **Protect the Co-op's Integrity:** Volunteers are integral to the Co-op's mission. Allowing individuals terminated for serious misconduct to volunteer in-store could undermine the trust and respect we have built within our cooperative community.
- **Uphold Co-op Values:** The Co-op's core values of respect, integrity, and cooperation must be upheld by all individuals involved in its operations, including volunteers.

## Exceptions

In certain exceptional cases, the Co-op may, at its discretion, consider reinstating eligibility for former employees terminated for serious offenses. Reconsideration may occur under the following conditions:

- **Formal Request:** The individual submits a formal written request to be reconsidered for volunteer eligibility, which must be at least ONE year after separation. This request will be reviewed by the Co-op's People & Culture Director and General Manager.

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by Co-op leadership, and the decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Procedures

1. **Eligibility Review:** Individuals terminated for serious misconduct will be flagged as ineligible for volunteer roles.
2. **Request for Volunteer Service:** After the required eligibility period has passed, individuals terminated for serious misconduct may submit a written request to be reconsidered for volunteer opportunities. Requests should be submitted to the Co-op's People & Culture Director.
3. **Decision Process:** Requests will be reviewed by the Co-op's People & Culture Director and General Manager. The decision will be based on the individual's history with the Co-op, the nature of the offense, and evidence of rehabilitation or behavioral change.
4. **Notification:** The individual will be notified in writing of the decision. If the request is denied, the individual will be informed of the reasons for the decision.

## Communication

This policy will be communicated clearly in all volunteer program materials and made available to any former employees requesting volunteer opportunities.

## Conclusion



The Brattleboro Food Co-op is dedicated to maintaining a positive, safe, and supportive environment for all staff, volunteers, and members. By limiting volunteer eligibility for individuals terminated for serious offenses, we aim to protect the integrity of our community and ensure that all those who engage with the Co-op reflect our core values of respect, trust, and cooperation.