



Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL)!

As you probably know, SMYAL (pronounced smile) is the only Washington, DC metro area service organization solely dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. As a community-based nonprofit organization, we depend on the dedication and efforts of our volunteers to make our programs successful. Enclosed you will find information about our volunteer opportunities and a volunteer application.

As a SMYAL volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Learn more about the many challenges facing our local area's LGBTQ youth
- Be a part of a vibrant, diverse group of concerned community members from many different fields all dedicated to making our community safer for our youth
- Develop or expand interpersonal, group facilitation, and/or organizational skills while learning how a community-based non-profit organization operates
- Make a real difference in the lives of our young people

Are you ready to get started? Great!

Before you start volunteering, there are a few things we will need from you:

- Complete our volunteer application
- Read and sign our Youth Interaction Agreement

If you'd like to work directly with our youth, we'll also need:

- Completed federal background checks
- Complete our day-long SMYAL Youth Center training, in which you'll learn more about our programs, Youth Center policies and procedures, and key youth work skills.
- Volunteers working directly with youth must be 24 years old – sorry, no exceptions!

If you aren't 24 or are not interested in working directly with our youth, don't worry, we have plenty of other ways to connect you to our work! Read on to learn more about our volunteer opportunities and to get connected. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at Amena.Johnson@smyal.org or 202-567-5164.

Sincerely,

Amena Johnson
Director of Programs



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities at different levels of commitment. Read more to see which ones will fit into your schedule.

Level 1:

Once or Twice a month, for a few hours, and we have flexible times and days

Youth Center Staffing:

- Providing homework help, helping youth use our Computer Lab, staffing the check-in station, and planning special events!

Administrative Support:

- Filing, shredding, performing data entry, updating our Youth Center bulletin boards, helping confirm vendors for upcoming events.

Special Event Opportunities:

- Youth Center Improvement: a few repairs, a fresh coat of paint, and some TLC. Every two or three months, we coordinate Lend a Hand days and bring 10-20 people in to help with small home repair and maintenance projects. Giving just a few hours of your time during the week or over the weekend could make a huge difference in making our space the best it can be for our young people!
- Fall Brunch: We hold one major fundraiser each year, the Fall Brunch, and need all the help we can get to make it a success! In the weeks leading up to it and on the day of, we need volunteers to help with picking up Silent Auction gifts, stuffing program books, setting up the ballroom, and more.

Level 2

At least twice a month or once a week, for a few hours, and we have flexible times and days

Program Facilitator:

- Work with one of our staff members to help facilitate one of our weekly programs
- As a level two volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to help plan events, lead discussions, attend field trips, and more!

Administrative Support:

- Work closely with one of our staff members on a weekly or semi-monthly basis
- Project-oriented support includes helping prepare for weekly programs, analyze and format data and documents, and more!

Level 3

20 hours a month or more – for our most dedicated volunteers!

LGBT Youth Outreach Coordinator:

We are always looking for new ways and opportunities to get the word out about our services – and it takes a lot of people power to do it! If you are interested in being a Youth Outreach Coordinator, you will help organize tabling opportunities, street outreach, and E-mail blasts to make sure our local LGBTQ youth all know about SMYAL and our upcoming events!



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

1. Please include a copy of your most up to date resume.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone:* _____ Evening Phone:* _____

Phone:* _____ Phone:* _____

E-mail address:* _____

Date of Birth: _____
(MM/DD/YY) _____

Are you currently employed? _____ What is your occupation? ** _____

If you are a social worker or medical professional, what license(s) and/or certification do you hold? _____

What is the highest level of education you completed? _____

* For your contact numbers and E-mail addresses, please only give information if you are comfortable with SMYAL contacting you here.

** Please also attach a copy of your resume to the application.



Youth Interaction Policy

SMYAL recognizes the inherent power imbalance between youth and adults, and the need to exercise extreme care so as not to take advantage of this imbalance in delivering services. The following guidelines for relationships between volunteers and SMYAL youth (a young person under the age of 22 who has sought or expressed any interest in seeking SMYAL services) are intended to assist SMYAL and its volunteers in maintaining a high standard of professionalism and responsibility in leadership.

Volunteer interactions with SMYAL youth, outside of formally scheduled SMYAL activities, should be limited to unplanned contacts in public places. In addition, the following standards must be followed:

1. Volunteers will not share in or encourage the use of alcohol or illegal drugs by any SMYAL youth.
2. Volunteers will not make a habit of seeing or talking to SMYAL youth outside the context of SMYAL activities. Phone calls to/from youth, e-mail contact, and one-on-one meetings of any kind with youth are beyond the accepted volunteer role. Contact with individual SMYAL youth after hours for social, recreational, personal, or counseling purposes is **strictly prohibited**.
3. Volunteers are responsible for assuring that interactions with SMYAL youth are non-sexual and that no messages are given to SMYAL youth that imply a sexual interest. Any contact involving or suggesting the establishment of intimate and/or sexual relations between volunteers and SMYAL youth, or between volunteers and members of a SMYAL youth's family, is **strictly prohibited**. (SMYAL volunteers are **additionally expected to refrain from sexual activity with any youth under age 18.**)
4. Planned social activities outside of SMYAL facilities must receive prior approval from the Executive Director and should be offered openly to all SMYAL youth.
5. Volunteers who are approached by SMYAL youth seeking to establish a relationship or obtain services beyond those provided by volunteers (i.e.: being asked for a home/office phone number or address, a place to stay, or counseling services) should inform the youth of the prohibitions on volunteer-youth interactions and refer the youth to the SMYAL staff for additional services.
6. Volunteers should inform the Executive Director if they have a pre-existing relationship with a SMYAL youth or potential SMYAL youth under age 22.
7. Violation of any of the above policies is grounds for the immediate termination as a SMYAL volunteer.



Youth Interaction Policy Agreement

I have read and agree to abide by SMYAL's Policy on Volunteer Interaction with Youth. I understand that violation of this policy may be grounds for my dismissal as a SMYAL volunteer.

Further, I agree that if I become aware of instances where another volunteer has violated the Policy on Volunteer Interaction with Youth, I will report such violations to SMYAL's Executive Director.

Print Name

Date

Signature

Date

The above-named volunteer has agreed to abide by SMYAL's Policy on Volunteer Interaction with Youth, has completed training requirements to become a volunteer, and is accepted as a SMYAL volunteer.

Executive Director

Date



Background Check Procedure

In order to create a safe environment for our youth, we require all volunteers to undergo a federal background check using MENTOR's SafetyNET program. More information about SafetyNET can be found at www.mentoring.org/safetynet

To complete the background, you must get your fingerprints taken at:

Central Business Services Inc
1634 I St NW # 406
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 628-3716

The office hours for the CBS are Monday through Friday from 8:30am-5:30pm. The cost for this process is \$15.00 for the background check (payable by cash or money order). SMYAL asks that volunteers pay for this expense, as well as the processing fee SMYAL incurs through SafetyNET.

After you have been fingerprinted, please take your fingerprint card and return it to SMYAL, along with a state-issued photo identification card, a completed volunteer application waiver notice, and \$18.00 payable to SMYAL in the form of a check, credit card, or cash to cover the processing cost.

If you have questions, please contact:

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