



The Rhode Island Free Clinic

◊ Primary Care ◊ Mental & Behavioral Health Services ◊ Specialty Clinics ◊

Trainee Handbook

The Rhode Island Free Clinic

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Thank you for your interest in becoming a trainee at The Rhode Island Free Clinic!

Mission Statement

Founded in 1999, Rhode Island Free Clinic's mission is to provide free, comprehensive medical care and preventive health services to adults who have no health insurance and cannot afford those services; and to serve as an educational training site for aspiring health care professionals.

The Clinic leverages vital health resources for Rhode Island's uninsured, working poor and low-income adults. The Clinic also provides the most efficient and cost effective alternative to emergency rooms for uninsured residents seeking comprehensive health care.

Who are Student Trainees?

Prospective trainees are current health professional students looking to gain hands-on health care experience through a field placement/internship at Rhode Island Free Clinic.

We are particularly interested in health professional students intending to work with underserved and culturally diverse patient populations. The Clinic's specific learning goals for its student trainees are outlined below.

Prospective trainees must be currently enrolled in a health profession training program at an educational institution.

Examples of acceptable health profession training programs include: Physician Assistant (PA) programs, Nurse Practitioner (NP) programs, Medical Assistant (MA) programs, Physical Therapy/Physical Therapist Assistant programs, Occupational Therapy programs, Health Information Technology programs, Public Health Programs, and Health Services Administration programs.

Learning Goals for Student Trainees:

1. Improve health discipline-specific medical skills.
2. Appreciate and utilize humanistic (biopsychosocial) model of health care.
3. Understand and identify social determinants of health.
4. Be able to work effectively on interprofessional health care teams.
5. Enhance cultural sensitivity skills in delivering health care.
6. Gain respect and concern for the unique health challenges faced by underserved populations.

How to Become a Trainee:

1. Read the Handbook!
2. Submit a Volunteer Application through the Free Clinic's website (<http://www.rifreeclinic.org/volunteers>).
3. Watch the online Clinic orientation video for student trainees.
4. Attend an in-person trainee orientation.
5. Provide a copy of your license and PPD test results.
6. Spread the word about Rhode Island Free Clinic!

Procedures and Policies for Trainees

Volgistics Application Procedure

- ALL trainees MUST have a volunteer application on file at Rhode Island Free Clinic (RIFC). No exceptions.
- The volunteer application can be found at the following link: <http://www.rifreeclinic.org/volunteers>

Volgistics Sign-In / Sign-Out Policy

- ALL trainees MUST sign in and out of Volgistics at the beginning and end of their volunteering shifts, respectively. The clinic is legally obligated to keep track of who provides service at the Clinic.
- The Volgistics sign-in touch-screen is located in the Volunteer Room. If you are unsure of how to sign in, please see a VISTA Volunteer.

Trainee Demographic Survey

- ALL trainees are REQUIRED to complete a demographic survey prior to the end of their volunteer term.
- The Clinic is required to periodically report this information to the federal government for funding purposes.
- All survey answers are kept confidential, and answers will be anonymized in all reports sent to the federal government. If you have any concerns, please contact a VISTA Volunteer.

Parking Procedure

- Please do NOT park in the parking lot directly in front of the RIFC.
- Please park in the fenced parking lot across the street.

Badge Usage

- You will receive your badge on your first day of volunteering.
- Trainees MUST wear their badge at all times.

Dress Code

- Please do not wear torn or dirty clothing.
- Please do not wear shorts, skirts above finger-tip length, or strapless shirts.
- Please wear closed-toe shoes if you will be going into clinic rooms (e.g. if you are a medical assistant or nurse practitioner student).

Cell phone/phone/personal computer usage

- Please put your phone on silent mode while at RIFC.
- If you need to make a phone call while at the RIFC, please inform the appropriate Volunteer Coordinator and step outside.
- You may not use your phone for any purpose while inside a Clinic room with a patient.

Trainee Attendance

- If you need to cancel a shift, please remove yourself from the online schedule as soon as possible. If it is less than 48 hours notice, please also always call or email the appropriate Volunteer Coordinator or your preceptor (whichever is most appropriate).
- Consistent absences without sufficient notice may result in a loss of volunteering privileges.

Kitchen use

- Feel free to use the fridge, microwave, dishes, etc., but please clean up after yourself. Wash your dishes in the sink or place them in the dishwasher and throw out any used, disposable food containers.

Harassment Policy

- RIFC is committed to protecting the rights and dignity of each individual it serves and of the staff and volunteers who help provide these services.
- This commitment necessitates a fair and productive work environment which is free of unlawful and improper harassment. As such, the Clinic has a zero tolerance policy for harassment. Offenders are subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of volunteering privileges.

- If harassment is personally experienced, please contact a staff member or a VISTA volunteer immediately!
- Harassment may be defined as unwelcome or unsolicited verbal, physical, or sexual conduct which:
 - Is made a term or condition of employment
 - Is used as the basis for employment decisions
 - Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment
- Examples of types of behavior that may be considered to be harassment are the following:
 - Verbal harassment: derogatory or vulgar comments regarding a person's race, sex, religion, ethnic heritage, or physical appearance. Distribution of written or graphic material can have the same effects and can be subject to the same disciplinary action.
 - Physical harassment: hitting, pushing, or other aggressive action, as well as threats to take such action.
 - Sexual harassment: unwelcome sexual advances or comments; gestures or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is also the use of one's authority and power to coerce another individual into sexual relations or to punish the other for her/his refusal.

Drug-free Workplace policy

- RIFC is committed to providing a drug-free workplace for its employees, volunteers, and patients.
- Unlawfully manufacturing, distributing, possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on RIFC premises or during working hours is strictly prohibited and is grounds for immediate termination.

Accidents and Incidents Policy

- Any and all accidents and incidents, no matter how minor, shall be reported in a timely manner to a VISTA Volunteer Coordinator or their Supervisor. A written, comprehensive narrative report must be completed by the involved volunteer and the VISTA.

Computer Policy

- The Internet/Email may be used only in accordance with Lifespan policies.
- All Lifespan communications services and equipment are sole property of Lifespan. Your use of these services and equipment is not private in any way.
- Misuse or abuse of the Internet/Email may result in the revocation of Internet/Email access privileges and/or disciplinary action, up to and including a termination.
- Always sign into computer programs using your ID and password which will be provided to you by the Volunteer Coordinator.

Security Policy

- RIFC is not responsible for personal belongings. You may use the lockers in the kitchen to store your personal belongings while here. If you wish, you can bring your own lock to use while you are here.
- If you feel uncomfortable walking to your car or waiting for a ride, you may ask the security guard to accompany you. The security guard is on duty every clinic evening until 9.30pm.
- No volunteer or staff member should leave alone. There should always be at least one other person leaving with the staff member who is closing the Clinic at the end of the night.
- In the event of a possible security threat, contact a staff member or VISTA volunteer.

Fire Safety Policy

- When a non-medical emergency is detected, one staff member will take charge. If the Executive Director is present, she will assume direction of the Clinic response to the situation. She will take appropriate measures until the emergency is over and/or the appropriate professional personnel have arrived to provide assistance.
- There are two exits with illuminated signs: one at the front and one at the back of the Clinic. Next to the exits are a fire extinguisher and a fire alarm pull-box.
- There are maps of the fire exits throughout the Clinic.
- In the event of a fire, the exit signs will light up.
- You are responsible for evacuating yourself and any patient you are directly working with.
- The staff and VISTA volunteers will be responsible for the general evacuation of all patients.

Confidentiality Policy/HIPAA/Computer confidentiality policy

- Volunteers at RIFC must maintain the confidentiality of all personal information about patients, other volunteers, and staff members that may be seen or overheard at the Clinic. This includes but is not limited to contact information, medical information, financial information, living arrangements, substance abuse history, employment situation, sexual orientation, and relationships with families and others. No matter what the source, this information should not be disclosed to anyone other than RIFC employees or volunteers who have a legitimate “need to know.”
- All RIFC staff and volunteers are required by law to adhere to all aspects of the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) Privacy Rule:
 - HIPAA Privacy Rule establishes national standards to control the use and disclosure of what is known as Protected Health Information (PHI).
 - PHI is any health information that is collected from the patient or created or received by RIFC that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health condition of a patient that could potentially identify that individual.
- In order to protect the confidentiality of all patients’ PHI, volunteers must commit to collecting and using PHI as allowed by state and federal laws.
- Most importantly, volunteers will share PHI within and outside of RIFC only when necessary for efficient routine operation of the RIFC; for a patient’s treatment; to provide additional medical services such as prescription assistance; or to assist with rectifying incorrect medical billings.
- A patient’s PHI will not be released for any other reason than those listed above unless the patient or authorized representative signs a written authorization or as otherwise permitted by law.
- The Privacy Rule gives patients the right to:
 - Receive a Privacy Notice
 - Inspect and get a copy of their PHI
 - Amend their PHI if incorrect
 - Request restriction on disclosures of PHI
 - Request alternative means of communication
 - Obtain accounting of non-routine disclosures of PHI
- RIFC employees and volunteer staff are to:
 - Use or disclose PHI only for work-related purposes
 - Limit uses and disclosures to the “minimum necessary” to achieve those work purposes
 - Exercise reasonable caution to protect PHI under their control
 - Understand RIFC privacy policies and follow them
 - Try to remedy any privacy problems or to report them to a VISTA volunteer or clinic employee
 - Note that “incidental uses and disclosures” are inevitable and do not violate the privacy rule as long as reasonable precautions are taken
 - Understand that reasonable limits and efforts, appropriate circumstances, and the nature of the information, are all that HIPAA requires

- Recognize that RIFC will not retaliate or discriminate against any patient or worker who exercises their rights or express a privacy concern

Computer confidentiality

- All electronically stored data, including patient and volunteer information, is subject to the same Confidentiality and HIPAA Privacy regulations as paper data.
- You must always log into your own account. You are responsible for any actions performed within your account.
- If leaving the computer, you must log out of your account.
- Do not change your password that you are given- it is important that the VISTAs be able to access your account in case any issues arise.

Trainee Policies and Procedures Agreement

I understand the policies and procedures of Rhode Island Free Clinic and agree to abide by them. I understand guidelines are intended to assist staff, volunteers, and patients in having a positive experience at the Rhode Island Free Clinic. I will consult a staff member or VISTA volunteer if I find myself in a situation that makes me uncomfortable or if I am questioning a decision or situation that needs to be handled. I understand that the material contained in these policies are provided for informational purposes only and the Rhode Island Free Clinic reserves the right to modify and delete any an all policies and procedures at any time. I understand that the receipt of these policies is not a contract for employment, benefits, or otherwise, and that my involvement with Rhode Island Free Clinic may be terminated, with or without notice or cause, by me or the Rhode Island Free Clinic.

Please check off that you have read and agree to abide by the following policies

- Volgistics Application Procedure
- Volgistics Sign-In / Sign-Out Policy
- Trainee Demographic Survey
- Parking Procedure
- Badge Usage
- Dress Code
- Cell Phone/Phone/Personal Computer Usage
- Volunteer Attendance
- Kitchen Use
- Harassment Policy
- Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Accidents and Incidents Policy
- Computer Policy
- Security Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy/ HIPAA/ Computer Confidentiality Policy

Student Trainee Signature

Student Trainee's Printed Name

Date

Frequently Asked Questions at the Clinic

1. Where is the Rhode Island Free Clinic located?

We are located at 655 Broad Street in Providence in the Hindle Memorial Building between St. Joseph's Hospital and Gallogly Funeral Home, accessible by taking Bus #11 Outbound from Kennedy Plaza to the St. Joseph's Hospital stop. You must check in with security before going to the third floor.

2. When is the Rhode Island Free Clinic Open?

The Rhode Island Free Clinic is open Monday and Wednesdays 9am-5pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am-9pm, and Fridays 8am-12pm. The Clinic has extended hours (9am-9pm) the 2nd Wednesday of every month for Women's Clinic and the 4th Monday of every month for Men's Clinic.

3. Do patients need an appointment?

Yes! Individuals must apply to become a patient at the clinic and must first go through an income eligibility screening process before becoming a patient of the clinic. Only once they are a patient of the Clinic, can individuals call and schedule appointments. We do not see anyone on a walk-in basis.

4. If a patient needs immediate medical care, can they walk-in to the Clinic?

No. Rhode Island Free Clinic **does not** provide emergency medical care. Patients with any serious or potentially life-threatening health problem should go the nearest emergency room immediately.

5. Are children seen at the Rhode Island Free Clinic?

No. We do not treat anyone under the age 18 at RI Free Clinic. All children are eligible for free health care in Rhode Island and should be regularly seen by a primary care physician. Visit the following website to learn more about health insurance for children in Rhode Island: <https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1612>.

6. What services does the Clinic provide?

The Clinic provides medical care for both acute illnesses and chronic conditions. The Clinic has over 50 volunteer primary care physicians and therefore offers comprehensive primary care. The Clinic also has many specialty clinics including psychiatry, cardiology, dermatology and many more! The Clinic also has wellness programs including diabetes education, asthma education, and healthy cooking classes.

7. Does it cost anything to be a patient at Rhode Island Free Clinic?

No! All services at the Clinic (including medications, lab work, and imaging studies) are completely free for patients.

8. Do I need to be a legal resident of the United States to become a patient at the Clinic?

No. We do not ask about patients' legal status. We accept anyone over the age of 18 who lives in Rhode Island and meets our health insurance and income eligibility requirements.