



volunteer orientation manual



EAST COOPER COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Welcome to ECCO



We are excited to have you join our Team of Volunteers! In this orientation, you will learn about the history of East Cooper Community Outreach (ECCO) and how our assistance, guidance, and resources help our neighbors navigate through life's challenges. We will also cover our vision, core values, and ECCO policies, as well as volunteer rights, responsibilities, and expectations.

ECCO was founded in 1989 by Monsignor James A. Carter, pastor of Christ Our King Catholic Church, in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo. The destruction caused by this major storm exposed needs that many leaders in the community had not previously identified. Those needs included: poverty, substandard housing, lack of access to health and dental care, hunger and the threat of homelessness. The creation of ECCO answered this challenge to offer a permanent resource to provide hope and help to those in need.

Our universal greeting of, **“Welcome to ECCO, how may I help you?”** is the first step our volunteers take to help families with storms still blowing through their lives today. We appreciate your time, efforts, and support of ECCO and our clientele. Thank you for becoming a volunteer; we are so glad to have you here!

Marion Harris

Volunteer Manager
volunteer@eccocharleston.org



Our Core Values



Our core values drive our vision, mission and how we serve the community. We ask volunteers to treat all clients, patients, staff, donors, and fellow volunteers with...

Compassion

It takes courage for our clients to walk through the doors of ECCO and admit they need help and assistance. We embrace the belief that we must treat others as **they** would like to be treated.

Collaboration

We are committed to an environment that encourages sharing knowledge, being open to new ideas and thoughts, and understanding how we can best support each other in making choices that put our client's needs before our own.

***Our Vision** is a community where all people can discover a path to opportunity — regardless of background, economic status, race, or beliefs.*

Respect

We believe in treating every person we interact with the utmost dignity, respect and grace. When engaging with others, we actively listen without judgment. The abilities, beliefs, and cultures of staff and neighbors in our community are valued and celebrated.

Integrity

When faced with difficult decisions and hard choices, we do the right thing, even in the face of adversity. Carrying out each action with honesty fosters trustworthiness amongst each other, with our clients, and in our interactions with others. In order to be honest with others, we must be totally honest with ourselves by consistently doing what is moral, just, and equitable in every situation, keeping in mind our Christian ideals and traditions upon which ECCO was founded.



ECCO Services



We serve men and women experiencing a wide array of challenges, including financial distress



Clothing Closet



Wellness Pantry



Health Services

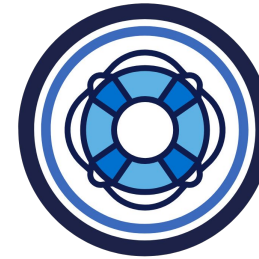


Client Services



Operations & Administration

*Click on the icon to learn more
about each program!*



Marketing, Events & Outreach



Who We Serve



ECCO services are available to those who live and/or work East of the Cooper River, with multiple services available to neighbors living in the Tri-County communities*. Clients are qualified by their income level up to 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.*

Receiving services at ECCO begins with a completion of our Client Eligibility form and an assessment from a Client Navigator. Clients who live or work in our service area are reassessed annually, and those unhoused are reassessed every six months*.

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) eligibility threshold is 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines*

**Medical/Dental services and prescription assistance are not available to those with insurance or Medicaid/Medicare*

**Clients older than 70 do not have to be reassessed.*

PERSONS IN FAMILY/ HOUSEHOLD		
	Max Income Per Month	Max Income Per Year
1	\$1,956.25	\$23,475.00
2	\$2,643.75	\$31,725.00
3	\$3,331.25	\$39,975.00
4	\$4,018.75	\$48,225.00
5	\$4,706.25	\$56,475.00
6	\$5,393.75	\$64,725.00
7	\$6,081.25	\$72,975.00
8	\$6,768.75	\$81,225.00
9	\$7,456.75	\$89,475.00
10	\$8,144.75	\$97,725.00
	Add \$688.00 for each person in household over 8 persons	Add \$8,250.00 for each person in household over 8 persons

2025 Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) Levels - 150%



Who We Serve

Last fiscal year, we assisted **1,535 households** with **2,890 members**:

- **42%** of those served are over 60 years old
 - **26%** of ECCO clients are retired
- **76%** of those served are women
 - **212** of ECCO clients are single mothers
 - **63** of ECCO clients are single grandmothers
- **62%** are African-American
- The average annual household income of ECCO Clients is **\$17,831**
- Our Wellness Pantry distributed over **740,000** pounds of food, which is worth about **\$1,981,534** in retail value
- **365** individuals from the tri-county were assisted in our medical & dental clinics
- Our Clothing Closet received **4,034** visits



East Cooper Communities

Living [or](#) Working in these zip codes:



- 29429
- 29434
- 29450
- 29451
- 29453
- 29458
- 29464
- 29466
- 29482
- 29492

88 Cents of Every Dollar Goes to Support ECCO's Mission



Transparency is a key component to nonprofit organizations that follow best practices. We want stakeholders like you, to know exactly where your support is going and how we are being good stewards of the funds the community has generously donated.

ECCO is a **501(c)(3)** nonprofit organization that relies on support from individuals, local businesses, grantors, family foundations, events, local churches and more. **100%** of your financial support goes to ECCO's impact in the community.

We're proud to say that ECCO is once again been named a Four-Star Charity on [CharityNavigator](#) with a 99% rating. In 2024, we were also awarded the Gold Transparency Award through [GuideStar](#).

If you're interested in learning more about supporting ECCO, please visit our website at: <https://eccocharleston.org/ways-to-donate/>



Staff Members & Board of Directors



For a full list staff pictures, contact information, and biographies, please visit

<https://eccocharleston.org/staff/>

Client Services and Program Staff

Client Navigation, Clothing Closet, Wellness Pantry

Health Services Staff

Medical and Dental Clinics

Administrative Staff

Executive Office, Finance, Operations, Grants

Development Staff

Marketing, Development, Volunteers

For a full list of Board Members and their backgrounds, please visit <https://eccocharleston.org/board/>

President - Andrew Davis | *President, TriMed Services, LLC*

Vice-President - Dr. John Maize, Jr. | *Dermatologist, MUSC*

Treasurer - Jason Hessberg | *Market Executive, Fifth Third Bank*

Secretary - Dawn Baker, RN | *Owner, Interim Healthcare*

Immediate Past President - Mike Burson, CLU, ChFC | *Owner, MD Burson Consulting*

Chairperson of Legal Affairs - Molly Hall, J.D. | *Attorney, Maynard Nexsen*



ECCO's Community Engagement Statement



We are committed to creating an environment where representation is a priority at all levels: among our clients, our staff, our volunteers, and our leadership.

At ECCO, we want everyone to have an opportunity to feel valued, have their voice heard, and know they are appreciated.

We acknowledge the existence of systemic biases, the significance of social inequities, and the imbalance of health disparities. ECCO chooses to continually train and educate ourselves on these differences to improve the well-being of our social environment and foster a sense of belonging within our community. We believe celebrating our community's diversity will promote connections and cultivate relationships, allowing ECCO to better serve our clients.



Customer Service & Confidentiality



We greet everyone who walks through ECCO doors with “**Welcome to ECCO, how may I help you?**” For many individuals, asking for help is not easy. We strive to make everyone feel welcome at ECCO regardless of their appearance, vehicle driven, or need.

All client information should be kept confidential. Do not share any names or identifying information about ECCO clients with anyone outside the organization. When sharing information among follow volunteers, please keep it to a need-to-know basis. Pictures and audio or visual recordings of clients/patients are prohibited unless directed by a staff member. Both the Medical and Dental clinics are governed by the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#) and all patient information is considered protected health information (PHI).

We expect volunteers to also keep donor information confidential to the standards listed above, including data from Charity Tracker and Charity Proud.



the client is...

- The most important person in our system. Without clients, there would be no need for the organization.
- Not a cold statistic, but a flesh and blood human being with feelings and emotions like our own.
- Not someone to be tolerated so that we can do our thing. They are our thing.
- Not dependent on us. Rather, we are dependent on them.
- Not an interruption of our work, but the purpose of it.
- We are not doing them a favor by serving them. They are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.

Volunteer Accountability Statement



With less than 20 staff members and over 400 active volunteers each month, volunteers make up the heart of ECCO. As a volunteer, we ask you to...

- Demonstrate ECCO's core values - **compassion, collaboration, respect** and **integrity** - in every interaction. We serve without assumption and never want people to feel "less than" because they are requesting assistance.
- Understand that although changes may be challenging, **serving clients and patients well is essential**. We hold our volunteers and staff accountable for consistently demonstrating our core values. Please be open to helping in whatever way is needed so we can execute our mission effectively.
- Be intentional in **seeing, hearing** and **connecting** with our clients and patients - you may be the best part of their day. They face various hardships, including transportation and health issues, so we go above and beyond to provide excellent customer service to support their complex needs.
- Remove yourself from any uncertain or uncomfortable client interactions, and ask an ECCO team member for assistance. We are here to **support your success** in this role and prioritize physical and psychological safety for both our clients and volunteers.



Volunteer Accountability Statement



- Greet every visitor with a cheerful **Welcome to ECCO! How may I help you?** Do not make assumptions based on someone's appearance, vehicle or why they walked through our doors.
- Follow the direction of all ECCO staff related to client decisions as our team is empowered to put people over processes at our discretion. At times, this may result in a team member making service adjustments to accommodate special needs or exceptions. **Please trust that we have the clients' best interest and refrain from questioning staff in the presence of others.**
- Understand how our volunteers fit into the bigger picture of ECCO's mission by attending mandatory trainings and optional workshops.

In the event you hear or see something that is in violation of these standards, please bring it to your program area manager's attention so ECCO can address it accordingly.



Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As an ECCO Volunteer, it is your right to:

- Be informed about ECCO, its programs and processes, within the confines of confidentiality.
- Be heard - Opportunity to offer ideas/suggestions, ask questions, and receive answers.
- Be given meaningful and suitable volunteer assignments, training, and supervision.
- Feel appreciated and valued - you are not “just a volunteer”.
- Receive reasonable accommodations for disabilities and physical limitations.
- Work in a safe environment - **Dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as weapons and firearms, are not allowed on property. ECCO does not tolerate abusive language or physical/sexual/visual harassment of clients, patients, donors, staff, or volunteers.** Please remove yourself and report any situation you or a peer feels threatened or endangered.



Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities



As an ECCO Volunteer, it is your responsibility to:

- Adhere to the guidelines, policies, and procedures of ECCO and refrain from imparting personal, political, or religious beliefs upon clients, patients, staff, donors, and fellow volunteers.
- Productively and professionally perform your duties to the best of your abilities without the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
- Follow through on volunteer commitments, to include arriving prepared and on time.
- Clearly communicate your needs, questions, and concerns to the ECCO staff and fellow volunteers.
- Follow the direction of all ECCO staff and be receptive to guidance, including role assignments, shifting responsibilities, and performance feedback.
- Participate in mandatory volunteer trainings, as well as optional workshops when possible.



Volunteer Handbook- General Information



Dress Code: The clothes worn are a matter of personal preference, but should reflect reasonable standards of neatness and good taste for the duties performed and the environment in which work is performed. Please refrain from wearing political or insulting statements or graphics. Wellness Pantry volunteers must wear closed toed shoes.

Please always wear your nametag.

Parking: Please park next door at Harris Teeter along the treeline facing Goodwill to allow spaces for ECCO clients.

Smoke Free Campus: For the benefit of all employees, volunteers, clients, patients, and visitors, ECCO maintains a non-smoking environment, which includes e-cigarettes and vaping devices.

Friends & Family Volunteer Policy: To ensure everyone's safety and compliance with ECCO's Volunteer policies, guests (including family and friends) cannot accompany established volunteers to their weekly shift. ECCO requires that all community members interested in volunteering follow the onboarding process for weekly commitments or register through Get Connected for Drop-In opportunities.



Volunteer Handbook- General Information



Safety: Following safety guidelines and providing a safe working environment is of utmost importance at ECCO. Please be aware of your surroundings, emergency exits, panic buttons, and other safety tools. First Aid kits can be found throughout the building and an AED is located in the main lobby area and in the medical clinic.

A safe establishment can only be possible through the efforts of each and every volunteer. You are responsible for abiding by all safety rules, operating equipment in a safe and proper manner and reporting any unsafe conditions. If you see a dangerous condition or an emergency situation like someone who is hurt, report it immediately to a staff member. Administer basic first aid and ask if the person needs an ambulance. Please refer to a staff member to have them fill out an accident report immediately. Tending to the care of the hurt individual is paramount.

Additional safety reminders:

- Do not step or stand on palettes in the Wellness Pantry or during Farmer's Markets.
- Follow [safe lifting practices](#) and remain mindful of your weight limit. Ask for help when needed.
- When using ladders or step stools, please have another volunteer or staff member assist you.



Volunteer Handbook- General Information



Internal Donation Policy:

In remaining consistent with the intent of our donors and abiding by the policies of the Lowcountry Food Bank, **items that have been donated to ECCO may not leave the property with anyone other than a client or with a staff member/volunteer who is making a delivery to a client's place of residence. Clothing and linen items that have been donated and deemed unusable or out of season must be placed in the textile recycling container.** Other items that cannot be used for ECCO programs or services can be placed in our Wellness Pantry free cart, donated to local nonprofits/schools, or discarded as deemed appropriate by the ECCO staff. **Volunteers cannot take anything home from the free cart.** The only person eligible to authorize differences to the policy is the Executive Director.

Absences:

If you have planned absences, please remove yourself from your shift(s) on Get Connected. Thank you for providing advance notice so we can prepare accordingly and serve our community well.

If you are absent unexpectedly, please contact your Program Manager as soon as possible. Please stay home to rest and recover if feeling ill or begin exhibiting signs of sickness.



Volunteer Handbook- Policies



At the end of your orientation, you will be asked to sign a Volunteer Orientation Verification Form to confirm you have read and reviewed the information provided as well as the policies below:

Sexual Misconduct Policy:

The purpose of this Sexual Misconduct Policy is to establish proper preventative measures to protect individuals against Sexual Misconduct and to specify courses of action in the event allegations or incidents regarding Sexual Misconduct are reported or occur at either East Cooper Community Outreach (ECCO) facility (1145 Six Mile Road or 1111 Bowman Road in Mount Pleasant, SC). [To view the full policy, click here.](#)

Whistleblower:

A whistleblower protection policy encourages volunteers to bring their concerns forward without fear of retaliation. Organizations that encourage complaints by having an “open door” policy and have a standard of “no retaliation” for raising concerns are considered more transparent and accountable. These organizations will be in a better position to address all concerns, whether they are about fraudulent accounting practices, unsafe conditions, or alleged discrimination or harassment. [To view the full policy, click here.](#)



Volunteer Handbook- Civil Rights Training



Civil Rights Protection Information: As a part of receiving US Department of Agriculture (USDA) foods, staff and volunteers must annually sign an acknowledgement form that they have received information regarding requirements for protecting civil rights of USDA clients. All staff and volunteers must know how to assist USDA clients to protect from discrimination and to whom any questions and concerns should be referred.

- **What is discrimination?** It is treatment which makes a distinction of one person or a group of persons from others either intentionally, by neglect, or by the actions or lack of actions based on a protected class. We must treat our neighbors and each other fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect. We have a legal obligation not to unlawfully discriminate either for or against anyone on the basis of protected classes.
- **Examples of discrimination are:** Providing less food to a person based on their age or sex; Denying service to a person because of a disability; Becoming disruptive towards someone based on their national origin.
- **Protected Classes:** Race, Age, Color, Sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), National Origin and Disability. Discrimination is prohibited based on religion, gender expression, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.



Volunteer Handbook- Civil Rights Training



USDA Nondiscrimination Statement: The **And Justice For All** poster found in each client service area explains the nondiscrimination policy of the USDA program and instructions for handling a discrimination complaint. This statement reads “In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).” [To view the full policy, click here.](#)

Civil Rights Complaints: Civil Rights complaints and program complaints may be different. Civil Rights complaints are based on protected classes whereas program complaints may be based on a dissatisfaction with an agency’s policies and procedures. Questions and concerns should be communicated to an ECCO staff member who will make corrective actions to address findings. Civil Rights complainants will refer to the **And Justice for All** poster for instructions and contact information for the government department that investigates discrimination complaints. They have 180 days after the incident to file a complaint.



Volunteer Handbook- Civil Rights Training



The Interpretive Services poster is displayed so that individuals who need a language interpreter know how to obtain the services.

Please look for these instructions posted in each client service area and review how to use them.

[Click here to download the poster from the Lowcountry Food Bank website.](#)

Instruction Card: Telephone Interpreting Services

200+ Languages
Available 24/7/365
Direct Dial: 503-484-2425

NEED AN INTERPRETER?

1. Dial 1-800-CALL-CLI (1-**800-225-5254**)
2. When the operator answers, tell them:
 - If you need a third-party dial-out
 - Your customer code is **469521**
 - You are calling from **SC Dept of Agriculture**
 - The language you need
 - The **Name of the Food Pantry**
3. The operator will connect you promptly

Recommendations for Using a Telephone Interpreter

For Outbound Calls:

- If you need to reach a limited English proficient (LEP) individual at home or need a third-party dial-out, please first inform the CLI operator before the interpreter is connected.
- Once the interpreter is connected, you can tell the interpreter who to ask for (the LEP's name).
- At this time, you can also tell the interpreter how to proceed if the call goes to voicemail and what message to leave, if desired.

For Inbound Calls:

- Explain to the LEP individual that all information is confidential and encourage questions.
- Speak clearly.
- Smile and be kind; this helps the LEP individual feel more comfortable.
- If face-to-face and multiple people are in the room, speak one at a time.
- Speak freely; all CLI interpreters are sworn to confidentiality, neutrality, and the Interpreter Code of Professional Ethics.
- Encourage the interpreter to clarify terms with you if necessary.



Separation of Volunteer Relationship



ECCO affiliates operate under an “At-Will” Agreement, meaning employees, employers, and volunteers may separate their relationship at any time with or without notice, without having to disclose reasoning. Although used as a last resort, we reserve the right to separate volunteer relationships for gross misconduct, to include:

- A threat or act of written, verbal, sexual, or physical violence
- Engaging in illegal activity on or off campus
- Volunteering under the influence or using illegal substances on campus
- Stealing or vandalizing ECCO property
- Chronic absences or tardiness without notifying your respective Program Manager(s)
- Disclosing confidential information or using it as leverage for personal gain
- Violating the policies outlined in this orientation
- Inappropriate usage of social media, an online presence, behaviors, or verbal communication within the community that conflicts with and/or inhibits you from furthering ECCO’s mission



We Want To Hear From You



Communication is key! We want you to be informed about what is going on at ECCO. We also want to hear your ideas, suggestions, questions and comments. Below are the ways you will hear from us and how to let us hear from you:

Stay informed about ECCO

- Volunteer Newsletter & ECCO Supporter Newsletter
- Information Boards in your area
- Volunteer Huddle before your shift
- Check out our website at: www.eccocharleston.org
- Social Media - Follow us on Instagram and Facebook - [@eccocharleston](https://www.instagram.com/eccocharleston)

Let us hear from you!

- Share ideas through the suggestion box or appreciation for staff and fellow volunteers through a Pay It Forward card
- Speak with our Volunteer Manager during open hours or attend a Volunteer Town Hall with our Volunteer Manager and Executive Director
- Contact volunteer@eccocharleston.org or 843-416-7111



Next Steps:

Thank you for reviewing our online orientation!

- As part of your onboarding process, we **require all volunteers** to verify they have reviewed and agree to the information outlined in this orientation.
- Please complete the form linked below:
[Volunteer Orientation Verification Form](#)
- If serving weekly, you will need to attend an in-person orientation. Please ask our Volunteer Manager for information on the next scheduled session.
- Please be on the lookout for additional refresher trainings and required annual trainings.



*Welcome to our
Team of Volunteers!*

