

Welcome,

Thank you for volunteering with the Capital Regional Vegan Network! CRVN hosts events throughout the year to educate and engage the community in meaningful dialogue about veganism, environmental conservation, animal rights, and health. Our volunteers are critical to fulfilling our mission of conducting outreach that encourages people to adopt a vegan lifestyle. Your work as a volunteer for CRVN helps us conduct meaningful conversations with individuals who may have otherwise felt a vegan diet and lifestyle were too difficult or out of reach.

The Volunteer Handbook provides answers to many of the questions you may have about the volunteer programs we offer. It covers policies and procedures, and our mutual responsibilities. You are responsible for reading and understanding the Volunteer Handbook, and for adhering to Capital Region Vegan Network's policies and procedures. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with the Volunteer Leader.

Thank you again for dedicating your time to the Capital Regional Vegan Network. Your mutual commitment to veganism is what empowers CRVN to continue educating the public and advocating for all people to adopt vegan lifestyles.

Sincerely,

Claire Henderson-Jain

Capital Region Vegan Network President

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Handbook Purpose

This handbook is meant to provide guidance to volunteers on how to best represent the Capital Region Vegan Network at events, meetups, and fundraisers. The Capital Regional Vegan Network tables at community events, hosts meetup group activities, and holds two signature events each year. This handbook includes recommendations and best practices for volunteers assisting at these events.

Mission, Vision and History

Mission: Capital Region Vegan Network empowers our community to adopt and maintain a vegan lifestyle through outreach, education, support, and advocacy.

Vision: Capital Region Vegan Network envisions a community that embraces healthy and sustainable vegan living on behalf of all beings and our shared earth.

History: Founded in 2006, CRVN (formerly Albany Vegan Network), is a not-for-profit organization based in Albany, New York.

After attending dozens of VegFests in the early 2000s, founding members Dawn D’Arcangelo, Jim LaCelle, Olga Dovgel, Dave Lajeunesse, and Jan Lajeunesse were inspired to bring vegan education to the Capital Region by way of a vegan festival.

The first of its kind in the area, ‘NY’s Capital Region Vegetarian Expo’ was held on September 15, 2007 in Saratoga Springs. The ensuing vegan festivals were held consecutively each year through 2014, and then again in 2016; with a 10-year anniversary festival held in the summer of 2018.

Since 2007, , what started as simply a volunteer-run annual festival has evolved far beyond our initial vision. In addition to Albany VegFest, the Network focuses on monthly gatherings, smaller educational events, food demonstrations, volunteer opportunities outside of the immediate organization, and much more.

Board of Directors and Staff

**Claire Henderson-Jain
PRESIDENT**

**Jennifer Wilson
VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE**

**Don Ferlazzo
SECRETARY**

**Rafael Epstein
DIRECTOR**

**Penny Perkins
DIRECTOR**

**Heimdall Imbert
DIRECTOR**

**Jennie Oesterreicher
DIRECTOR**

Staff

**Sarah Shearer
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Erica Rose Thomas
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

Programming and Events

Capital Region Vegan Network flagship events include Albany VegFest in the fall, outreach at the AlbanyTulip Fest in spring, and VEG OUT in summer.

Albany VegFest

The Capital Region Vegan Network's signature event requires significant volunteer participation. Volunteers help with morning set up and evening breakdown, assist in directing vendors, provide additional support to event staff, and provide other help as needed.

VegFest currently is held each fall from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Albany Capital Center (55 Eagle Street, Albany, NY); featuring more than 100 exhibitors, expert speakers, fantastic vegan food, a kids' corner, and more.

Tulip Fest

Throughout the year, the Capital Region Vegan Network tables at community events. Tabling provides CRVN the opportunity to share information, educate non-vegans, and shed light on the horrors of factory farming. Tulip Fest is one of the larger events where CRVN tables. The event takes place the Saturday and Sunday of Mother's Day weekend. CRVN is required to staff the table from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm both days. Volunteers at Tulip Fest will need to arrive early to help with set up and stay late to assist in breakdown.

While at Tulip Fest, volunteers will pass out samples of vegan food, share literature that provides information about veganism and answers questions people may have, and operate the black box video.

VEG OUT

The VEG OUT food festival is a new event for CRVN, started in 2019. VEG OUT is a food festival that showcases vegan food by area restaurants and eateries. Volunteers will be needed to assist with vendor set up, staffing CRVN's table, garbage collection, distributing donated seltzer and pizza, and standing at each of the entrance and exit points at the festival.

Volunteer Expectations

The Capital Region Vegan Network expects volunteers to be punctual and organized, great communication skills and a passion for veganism. Volunteers must be vegan or transitioning to a vegan lifestyle. There is no “experience” level required to volunteer, just an open mind and a commitment to veganism.

- Volunteers are expected to report to their shifts on time and stay until they are relieved by another volunteer.
- Volunteers should tell the Volunteer Leader or the appropriate staff person or board member if they are having any issues.
- Volunteers should work with the Volunteer Leader to accomplish their volunteer duties.
- Volunteers should not convey any message to visitors that is not in line with CRVN's mission.
- Volunteers should not advocate for other causes while volunteering with CRVN.
- Volunteers should read this manual and report to any volunteer training before their scheduled volunteer event.
- Volunteers should comply with CRVN's policies and procedures and talk to the staff or board members if they have any questions or concerns.

Volunteer Orientation

The following are the steps required to become a volunteer with Capital Region Vegan Network:

1. Submit [Volunteer Questionnaire](#)
2. Complete phone screen
3. Attend training session
4. Sign Volunteer Agreement

Volunteer Training

Volunteer training can be conducted in person or via conference call. Training is provided to answer questions volunteers may have and to highlight some of the important sections of this handbook. Training dates, times, and location (if applicable) will be determined by the Volunteer Leader.

Volunteer Positions and Roles

Table Set Up

On event days CRVN staff or board members will bring literature, food, video equipment, and tables and chairs (if applicable) to the event site. Set up volunteers may be asked to report up to one hour before an event to help unpack materials and food and set up table. Set up volunteers must be able to lift 50 pounds.

Table Break Down

Break down volunteers will be required to stay after an event has been completed. Break down volunteers will assist CRVN staff or board members in putting away literature, throwing away or recycling any waste, and dismantling the table. Break down volunteers must be able to lift 50 pounds.

Food Handler

CRVN gives vegan food samples to visitors at events. Food types vary depending on the event. Food handlers must wear plastic gloves when setting up or handing out samples. Samples can be set out on a platter and left for visitors to take on their own. Please keep the food sample area as clean as possible and discard any used plates, napkins, toothpicks, or other utensils as soon as possible.

Video Operator

CRVN pays visitors \$1 to watch a graphic 4-minute factory farm video. This video is played on tablets and portable DVD players which are provided by CRVN. On your volunteer day, staff or a board member will show you how to operate the tablets. Each tablet is preset to only play the video and each unit is equipped with a set of headphones. Those who watch the whole video will be awarded with the dollar. After they've watched the video, try to engage them in meaningful dialogue about what they witnessed. Share with them some of CRVN's materials and encourage them to sign up to learn more about the work CRVN does. If children approach to watch the video, first get permission from an accompanying parent or other adult.

Table Volunteer/Literature Distributor

General table volunteers are expected to be kind and courteous and knowledgeable about the materials CRNV has available at the table. Table volunteers should engage with visitors in a positive manner. Visitors should be encouraged to take any educational or CRVN promotional materials they would like and to sign up for email alerts. Table volunteers should tell visitors about any upcoming CRVN events. Table volunteers should not attempt to challenge or debate any non vegans. If a visitor is not being receptive to you, attempt to meet them where they are by providing them with a vegan recipe guide or other promotional materials about the work of CRVN. Vegans and vegetarians who visit the table should be encouraged to sign up as a CRVN member and be given a list of member perks.

All Volunteers

If possible, do not leave the table unattended. If you must leave the table unattended, please bring the cash box and any other valuable items with you. If you have an issue with a visitor harassing you or anyone at the table, please report it to CRVN staff, board members, or the appropriate event official immediately.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Expectations of Volunteer Conduct

Volunteers should be courteous to visitors and as helpful as possible to event vendors, CRVN staff, and board members. If you are unable to help with a project, please let the Volunteer Leader, staff, or a board member know your concerns. We appreciate volunteers' time and commitment to our organization and we want to make volunteering with CRVN as pleasant as possible. If at any point you feel uncomfortable when dealing with a visitor, working with other volunteers or staff, or for any other reason, please immediately voice your concerns to the Volunteer Leader, staff, or a board member.

Speaking With One Voice

CRVN's mission is to empower our community to adopt and maintain a vegan lifestyle through outreach, education, support, and advocacy. Volunteers should not present information that conflicts with CRVN's mission. Volunteers should also not promote other organizations or ideas that may support CRVN's mission but are not directly associated with CRVN. There are many ways to advocate and educate about veganism, CRVN prefers to take user friendly, educational materials that are

Dress Code

Volunteers should not wear any clothing or accessories that represent other organizations or individuals, or convey a specific message that does not align with CRVN's mission. Ideally, volunteers will wear a CRVN t-shirt if available, or will wear plain, solid colored clothing.

Dealing With Hostile Visitors

Veganism has not yet been widely accepted. Many individuals feel uncomfortable when faced with the harrowing fact that animals and the environment are abused daily for the sake of societal norms. Although most event participants will be friendly, some may be hostile or argumentative. Do not attempt to debate with these visitors. Try to find common ground with the person and meet them where they are.

If you see your fellow volunteer dealing with an agitated visitor try to help them mitigate the situation. Find the Volunteer Leader, CRVN staff member, or board member. They can help defuse the situation if a visitor's hostility makes you uncomfortable; or they can ask the visitor to leave. If you feel you or your fellow volunteer might be endangered.

Dealing With Difficult Questions

CRVN provides a plethora of materials to help answer some of the most commonly asked questions about veganism. However, if you get a question you can't answer, it is perfectly acceptable to tell the person you don't know and ask them to give you their contact information to be shared with the staff or board.

Where to Direct Issues Related to Volunteering

On the day of the event, any issues that arise related to the table, materials, food, video equipment, or other supplies, can be directed to the Volunteer Leader. If there is an issue with something related to a vendor, visitor, or the venue itself, any member of CRVN's staff or board can help address the situation.

Where to Direct Other Concerns

CRVN has a strict anti harassment and anti discrimination policy. If you feel that a fellow volunteer, staff member, or member of the board has violated this policy, please report them to the Volunteer Leader immediately. If the Volunteer Leader has violated this policy, please report them to a member of the staff or board.

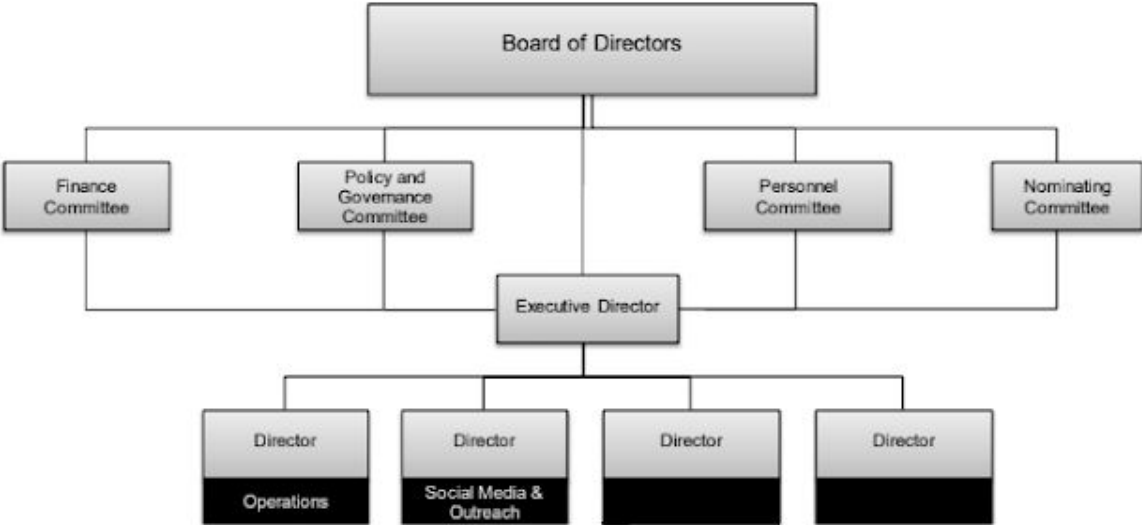
What to Do if You Cannot Make Your Shift

If you cannot make your shift please tell the Volunteer Leader or a member of the CRVN staff or board as soon as possible via phone call, email, or text. If you cannot communicate your absence until the day of your scheduled volunteer shift, inform the Volunteer Leader immediately via text or phone call.

Contact Information

CRVN Board of Directors - avnboard@gmail.com

Capital Region Vegan Network Organizational Chart



Volunteer Agreement and Release From Liability

1. I, _____, agree to work for Capital Region Vegan Network as a volunteer for _____ on/from _____.
2. As a volunteer, I understand that I control the dates and times when I do the work and that Capital Region Vegan Network is not responsible for scheduling my volunteer work. I also understand that I will not be compensated for any time spent volunteering, nor am I entitled to benefits, including employment insurance benefits upon the termination of this agreement or as a result of this service.
3. I am aware that participation as a volunteer may require periods of standing, lifting and carrying up to 40 pounds (or 50 pounds if so specified in the Volunteer Handbook as then in effect) and other physical activities that will require the exercise of reasonable care to avoid injury. I am voluntarily participating in this activity with knowledge of the hazards and potential dangers involved, and agree to accept any and all risks of personal injury and property damage.
4. By volunteering for Capital Region Vegan Network, I hereby agree that I, and my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, will not make a claim against or sue Capital Region Vegan Network or its employees, agents or contractors for injury or damage resulting from the negligence, whether active or passive, or other acts, however caused, by any of its officers, employees, agents, or contractors of Capital Region Vegan Network as a result of my volunteering. I HEREBY RELEASE AND DISCHARGE CAPITAL REGION VEGAN NETWORK AND ITS OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS AND CONTRACTORS FROM ALL ACTIONS, CLAIMS, OR DEMANDS THAT I, MY HEIRS, GUARDIANS, AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES NOW HAVE, OR MAY HAVE IN THE FUTURE, FOR INJURY OR DAMAGE RESULTING FROM MY VOLUNTEERING.
5. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I AM INJURED IN THE COURSE OF VOLUNTEERING, I AM NOT COVERED BY CAPITAL REGION VEGAN NETWORK]'s WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM. I authorize Capital Region Vegan Network to seek emergency medical treatment on my behalf in case of injury, accident or illness to me arising from my involvement as a volunteer. I understand that I will be responsible for medical costs incurred by reason of such accident, illness or injury.

Date

Volunteer Signature

Printed Name

Date

Capital Regional Vegan Network Representative Signature

Printed Name

If volunteer is under 18 years of age, parent or guardian must read and sign the following:

This release, its significance, and assumption of risk have been explained to and are understood by the minor.

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Printed Name