



**Guidebook for
Jesuit Volunteers**

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Still Have Questions? Ask your Program Coordinator!

Welcome to Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest

Mission Statement

Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) Northwest responds to local community needs in the Pacific Northwest by placing volunteers who provide value-centered service grounded in the Jesuit Catholic tradition. Honoring the Divine at work in all things, we envision the Northwest as a sustainable region where all live in dignity, are treated justly, and actively contribute to their own empowerment and positive change in their communities. JVC Northwest strives to live out the four values of community, simple living, social and ecological justice, and spirituality/reflection.

Equity Statement

JVC Northwest is grounded in the Jesuit Catholic tradition; a tradition that approaches the world and everything in it as expressions of the Divine. This same worldview propels us to work for equity in our organization and the communities in which our volunteers live and serve. We will know JVC Northwest is embodying equity when we are able to sustain an organization that reflects and meaningfully collaborates with the communities with whom we serve by sharing power and building organizational strategies.

An equitable organization ensures that everyone has access to the same opportunities.

Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist and, as a result, we do not all start from the same place. Equity is a process that begins by acknowledging this unequal starting place and continues to correct and address the imbalance.

To achieve true social justice, we must move beyond good intentions to include and advance those most impacted by the marginalization we seek to end. This commitment requires JVC Northwest to critically examine the continued presence of our volunteers everywhere, particularly in communities of color, as well as acknowledge and amend the historical injustices of the past. To do this most justly, JVC Northwest commits to interrogating our past as an institution so we can be sure of all the ways we have harmed communities we intended to help.

To be an equitable organization, we must provide meaningful opportunities to those who face the barriers of bias, poverty, and other systemic injustice to have voice and fully participate in co-owning strategies and sharing power. We will intentionally create and maintain an organizational culture and a set of policies and procedures that welcome and support a diverse staff, board, volunteers, and partner agencies. We call our constituents, including supporters and larger communities, into this deep and wide process. This work is core to our mission of social justice. It is the work of grace and a reflection of Divine love.

History of Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest

Note: JVC Northwest is currently undergoing a revision process of our history and acknowledgment that we hope to complete by Fall 2019. Please check our website at that time for an updated history.

Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) Northwest began in 1956 with a few committed volunteers who helped build and teach in the new Copper Valley School in Copper Valley, Alaska, a boarding school for Native Alaskan and White Alaskan students. The first volunteers were recruited and supported by the Jesuits of the Oregon Province and the Sisters of St. Ann.

The program expanded out of Alaska in the 1960s working with Native American communities throughout the Northwest, as well as serving in inner city placements in Washington, Oregon, other states and countries. JVC Northwest has been the catalyst for hundreds of other faith-based volunteer organizations, including other JVC regions, and even served as a model for the U.S. Peace Corps. In JVC Northwest's 60+ year history, over 6,000 persons have served in our program.

Today JVC Northwest recruits, places and supports Jesuit Volunteers (JVs) working with people on the margins of society and in vulnerable places. Currently over 120 Jesuit Volunteers in the Northwest region are committed to serving for one or more years in over 75 shelters, schools, health, and social and ecological service organizations. Throughout Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana they are serving in inner cities, rural areas, and Native American and Native Alaskan communities. They are providing essential skills, willing hands and great idealism for a better world.

The JVs reside for the service year in 24 intentional communities of three to eight people and commit to living out the values of community, simple living, social and ecological justice, and spirituality. Living expenses, a modest monthly stipend, health insurance and travel home at the end of their service year are provided to the JVs. In June, 2010 JVC Northwest received a National Direct Award from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) enabling most of our Jesuit Volunteers to also be AmeriCorps members; in 2013, 2016, and 2019 we received additional three-year grants. These grants have made it possible for JVC Northwest to go where the need is greatest and to enable our partner agencies to extend their services at a greatly reduced cost.

JVC Northwest is separately incorporated as a 501(c) (3) organization. Since 1974, JVC branched from having its only office in the Northwest into five domestic regions and one international region (JVC International), each with an independent non-profit office. In 2006, other JVC/JVC International programs in the U.S. consolidated into JVC (based in Baltimore), while JVC Northwest discerned to remain independent and locally-based to better serve local and regional communities in the Northwest.

JVC Northwest is committed to continually building a just and equitable workplace in order to work toward our vision of a just and equitable Northwest region.

The JVC Northwest staff continues the work of the four values within the office, constantly reviewing internal practices.

Roles and Relationships

Partner Agencies

The **service** experience of Jesuit Volunteers is central to the JV year. Following the guidelines/policies set forth in the placement agreement is critical for building a positive foundation at service. As you foster a healthy relationship with your placement and site supervisor, consider a few topics:

<i>Bereavement</i>	We hope that no JV will ever need to take time away from service due to the death of a loved one. However, if a JV needs bereavement leave, they should follow the policy in place at their service placement.
<i>Clear Communication</i>	Establish how you will communicate with your site supervisor and clarify the expectations of your role as a JV with the agency. Identifying early on how you will work together will contribute greatly to having a healthy and meaningful service experience.
<i>Injury at Service</i>	If you are injured at service, contact the JVC Northwest office as soon as possible (the same day, ideally) . JV/AmeriCorps members are covered by Worker’s Compensation under JVC Northwest, not through your agency’s workers compensation policy.
<i>Leave Time</i>	JV/AmeriCorps members have 10 days of leave from service. Clarify with your site supervisor how to request time away from service, how to find out if your request has been approved, and when to communicate any requests. We expect you to communicate early - certainly before buying flights or tickets. Also, be sure to let them know well in advance the dates you will be away from service to participate in JVC Northwest retreats. The retreats do not count toward your 10 leave days. JVs are expected to serve until the end of service date on their Placement Agreement (May, June, or July). If you know you will need to request an early end date, you must have leave days available to use
<i>Reasonable Accommodation</i>	Please make requests for adjustments or adaptations at your service placement if you need them in order to perform the essential tasks of your position <u>due to a disability</u> . JVC Northwest staff are happy to help you shape accommodation requests, role-play the request conversation, and help negotiate with your placement if needed. Please contact your Program Coordinator, JV Program Manager, and/or Director of Programs for assistance. Although AmeriCorps service is not considered a “job,” the Job Accommodation Network is a valuable resource, and includes an A-Z accommodation idea list: https://askjan.org/ .
<i>Safety Procedures</i>	Ask your supervisor about emergency evacuation plans and other safety protocols for your placement.
<i>Sick Time</i>	JVs follow the sick leave policy of their placement agency. Learn the policies and guidelines should you get sick during your JV year. The agency relies on your consistent presence. If you are unable to perform your duties due to illness, make sure you are informed of the protocol. Should you develop a critical illness that prevents you from serving for more than five consecutive days, contact your Program Coordinator. For JV/AmeriCorps members, there are certain protocols to ensure that hours can be met as time away from service due to illness does not count toward service hours. Depending on the nature of the illness, sometimes accommodations can be made to work from home.
<i>Vehicle Use</i>	Whether you are borrowing the agency’s vehicle or using your own vehicle for service, best practice is to have an agreement, in writing, detailing the responsibilities you hold and those your agency holds. For example, who pays for gas and what is the process for reimbursement? (We expect that all personal vehicle use comes from your own transportation budget.) Who is responsible for car maintenance, repairs, cleaning, etc.? Do you have permission to use the agency vehicle for personal use? If so, under what conditions? Having clear conversations early on and checking in regularly is a best practice. If in doubt, ask questions to clarify and ensure everyone is on the same page.

The Role of Your Program Coordinator

Your Program Coordinator (PC) is your primary contact in the JVC Northwest office during the year. A Program Coordinator has interviewed you and placed you at your service position. They journey through the year with you, being a resource and visiting your community and agency during the year. As a representative of the mission and values of JVC Northwest, the role of the Program Coordinator is to support and challenge you to live the four JVC Northwest values so that your year is as fulfilling as possible for you, your community, and the people you serve.

You are invited to share hopes and expectations and ask questions on procedures and policies. When difficulties arise within your community or placement, it is important to communicate what is happening as early as possible, so that your PC can support you. Part of the role of a Program Coordinator is to guide and mentor JVs through difficult situations. When necessary, your PC will intervene to bring problems to resolution. If you have identified something that might be helpful, help your PC by asking for it. PCs also appreciate hearing about the fun and challenges that JVC Northwest brings in each JV's life!

Although the roles of the PC and the Support Persons overlap in some instances, the Program Coordinator handles the overall dynamic of the JV year, while the Support Persons provide more regular, local contact with the JV and community. Support Persons are important because of their presence in communities and proximity to JVs.

What Does a Program Coordinator Do?

- Provides an **overview of the year** at Orientation, and **familiarizes you with JVC Northwest resources** available to you.
- **Challenges you to live the four values** in your personal life, community, and service placement.
- **Holds you accountable** to JVC Northwest policies and expectations.
- Visits each community twice on **Area Visits** and agency at least once during the year to see how things are going for you personally, in your service placement, and in your community. These visits give your PC an opportunity to offer you support and to help your community function well and grow as a group within the framework of the four values.
- **Provides coaching and mentoring through difficult conversations** related to JV communities, JV colleague relationships, conflicts, mental and physical health, racial justice, and more.
- **Recruits, develops, and evaluates prospective partner agencies** to assess their suitability as JV placements and, with your input, offers recommendations to the JVC Northwest staff regarding those prospective partners.
- **Communicates regularly** with your community.
- **Plans and coordinates retreats.**
- **Represents the mission, values, and goals of JVC Northwest** if problems arise at your agency, in the community, or individually.
- Monitors and **ensures AmeriCorps grant compliance.**
- **Advocates** for both your interests as a JV and the interests of your placement agency.
- **Maintains contact with Support Persons.**
- **Identifies resources and supports** for, and in collaboration with, JVs.

If you need something that your Program Coordinator has not offered you, please speak to them directly about your expectations and needs. Program Coordinators are not meant to be therapists, spiritual directors, financial advisors, or friends for JVs.

Local Support Community

The JVC Northwest staff asks people who live in the locales where JVs serve to act as Support Persons to JV communities. In locales where JVs have designated Support Persons, Support Persons provide an ongoing local contact for the JV community during the year. Your Support Persons – and in some more remote communities Support *Person* – may meet you when you arrive and will probably help to introduce you to the town or city. Some Support Persons have also volunteered to facilitate a series of community-building sessions with your community. Because they are familiar with the area, Support Persons can help you become acquainted with the people, places, local faith communities, and ways of the area. They may be able to help you find resources for spiritual direction, prayer and retreat opportunities, involvement with social or community activities, and recreation. They will support your community in living out the four core values and model those values in their own lives. JVC Northwest has found Support Persons to be a key part of the JV year. Outside support and an objective presence are helpful in the development of a healthy community.

How does it happen?

Your Support Persons will contact your community during the first week after your arrival. They will meet with you in order to introduce themselves. The team of Support Persons is made up of former Jesuit Volunteers (FJVs) or friends of JVC Northwest who have volunteered to provide support in the local area through a variety of ways which may include social events, opportunities to get to know the area, and/or facilitating a series of community sessions. Some Support Persons may focus on formal meetings with sessions on communication, spiritual practices and sharing, or social and ecological justice. Others may take an informal approach, getting together with community members either on a drop-in basis or for a meal or a chat or for a social event. Throughout the entire year, it is expected your community will invite your Support Persons to gather with your community regularly. Building relationships with your Support Persons is important for them to provide the support you and the community need. After the year begins, *you and your community should take the initiative for get-togethers*, but Support Persons will probably check in regularly. Invite your Support Persons to join you for activities; they are interested in being part of your JVC Northwest experience!

Relationship between the Support Persons and the JVs

It is the JV community's responsibility to reach out to Support Persons and to take the lead in building a positive relationship with them. Please welcome time with your Support Persons as an important part of your year. Developing a relationship with them is part of your commitment as a member of JVC Northwest. Support Persons are resources for you as individuals and as communities. Support Persons are connected with JVC Northwest communities to share information with you and to encourage you in your year. While they may sometimes make constructive suggestions intended to help enhance your JVC Northwest experience, the responsibility for creating and sustaining a viable community life rests with each community member. Your PC will check in with your Support Persons during the area visits. Your PC may ask the help of Support Persons to ensure that the house is in good shape for the next group of volunteers.

Relationship between the Support Persons and the Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator and the Support Persons share a mutual responsibility to keep each other informed during the course of the JVC Northwest year. The PC will pass on any information that would be helpful to the Support Persons in carrying out their roles. Likewise, Support Persons have the responsibility to contact the PC, or to urge you or your community to contact the PC, whenever there are significant developments for a JV or in a community. This contact is important because of the distance between the PC and the locale. The PC has resources that may help in certain situations. JVC Northwest policies require that the PC be apprised of certain situations in order to address them in a timely way (such as a JV leaving early, a JV with signs of addiction, etc.).

If your locale does not have formal Support Persons

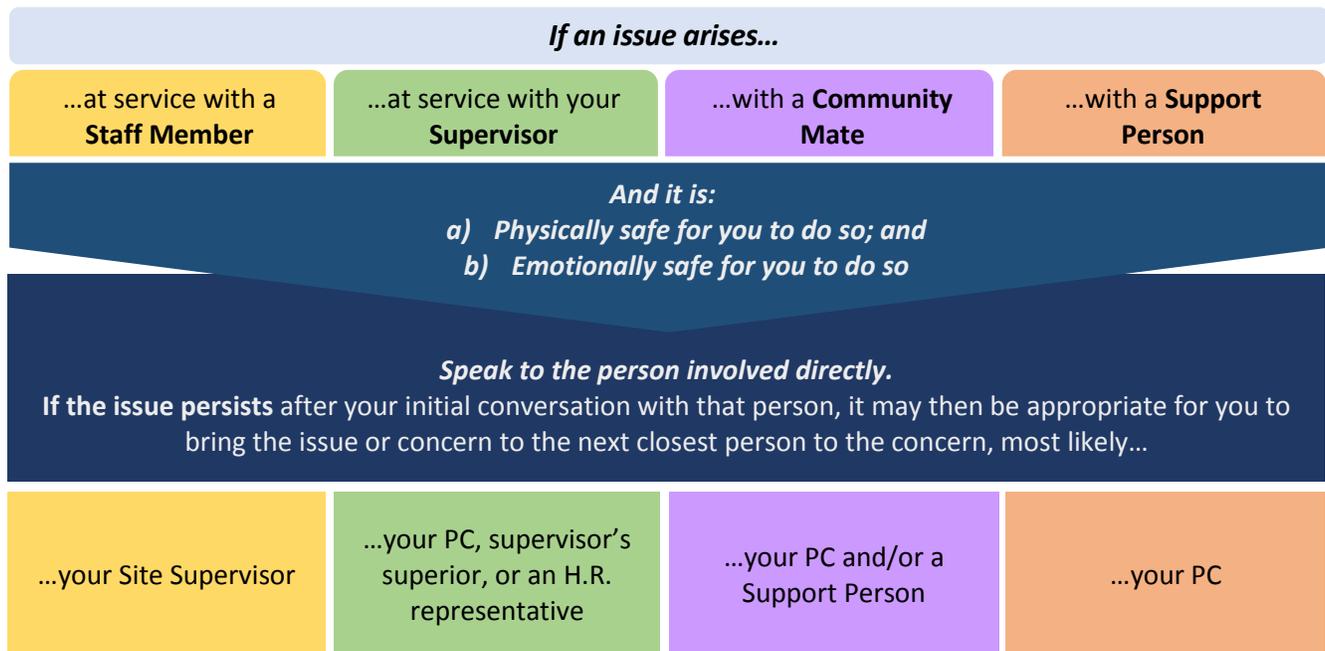
The JVC Northwest Office aims to provide each locale with a formal team of support; however, the remoteness of some locales prevents this from being possible. These locales still have numerous informal support persons and cheerleaders of JVs whom they can rely on for some support and contact. The informal community that surrounds the community is an invaluable source of information about the city, culture, and resources. The JVC Northwest office also asks that JVs without formal support persons cultivate relationships in the community that may become formal support persons in the future. Contact your Program Coordinator if you know of someone in your locale who may be a great formal support person for your JV community or future JVs in your community.

What Should I NOT Expect from My Support Persons?

<p>Support Persons are not expected to spend money on the JVs.</p> <p>A simple lifestyle is a commitment for the JVs, and you have sufficient funds for food, rent, utilities, etc. You also have a stipend for personal needs, and are expected to decline funds from outside sources during their JV year. Support persons are donating their time and skills to JVs and to JVC Northwest.</p>	<p>Support Persons are not meant to be substitute parents.</p> <p>Support persons are not responsible for how the JVs behave. They are encouraged to give feedback to the Program Coordinator, whose role is to support JVs in managing issues and concerns. Their role is not to solve JVs' problems or to meet all of their needs.</p>	<p>Support Persons are not obligated to let the JVs borrow their vehicle.</p> <p>Simple living and ecological justice are values the JVs commit to in their year and we hope they think of creative ways to get from Point A to Point B. <i>It is the support person's decision whether or not</i> they want to offer your car but this is not a required role of a support person.</p>
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Practice of Subsidiarity

With roots in Catholic Social Teaching, “subsidiarity” is the idea that issues should always be addressed first at the most local level or closest to where the impact will be. In relationships and at your service placement, subsidiarity asks that issues be addressed whenever possible with the person directly involved first before going to your Program Coordinator or an authority figure.



Continue in this way until the issue has been resolved

Whenever possible, the PC will assist a JV in addressing concerns directly with their supervisor. If you feel nervous or unsure of how to begin your initial conversation with someone directly, your Program Coordinator can be used as a resource to practice or work through how you might approach the conversation beforehand. Your PC is not there to have the conversation on your behalf.

Contact Guide for JVC Northwest Staff

See the guide below to identify the appropriate staff person to contact when you have questions and concerns.

<p><i>Program Coordinator</i> <i>Dana, Greg, Kyler, Mo, Scott, or Sean</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support/Guidance regarding any of the values and/or equity • Questions/Feedback/Requests regarding the JVC Northwest program • Discussing the gifts and challenges of the service placement • Locale concerns/resources • Updates about health, injury, community, etc. • Site Supervisor/Position Description Changes
<p><i>JV Program Manager</i> <i>Sarah Jones</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level concerns, please CC the Program Coordinator • On-Call Emergencies-including any communication outside of regular business hours • Reimbursement for medical co-pays (Independent JVs only)
<p><i>Director of Programs</i> <i>Kate Stinson</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Management questions/concerns • Assistance regarding Accommodation Requests • Higher-level concerns, please CC JV Program Manager and Coordinator • On-Call Emergencies
<p><i>AmeriCorps Assistant</i> <i>Maisie Rosenheimer</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding AmeriCorps paperwork and OnCorps Timesheets • Capacity-Building Performance Measurement/Projects • Sharing stories about AmeriCorps service through Blogs and Great Stories • Changes to Site Supervision
<p><i>AmeriCorps Manager</i> <i>TBD</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Insurance Questions/Concerns • Overarching questions related to AmeriCorps including Student Loan information, Education Award, and Prohibited Activities • Questions about OnCorps Timesheets • Education and Health Performance Measurements
<p><i>Business Assistant</i> <i>Sandy Parker</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding bookkeeping/finances and financial reports • Budget questions • Sending receipts for reimbursement • Property Management support (especially if JVC Northwest owns your house)
<p><i>Executive Director</i> <i>Tim Hennessy (Interim ED)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest-level concerns that cannot be solved with the Program Coordinator, Manager, or Director • Reporting Abuse/Misconduct
<p><i>Recruitment and Marketing Manager</i> <i>TBD</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending photos, stories, and videos to be featured on social media, blogs, etc. • Recruiting assistance • Other staff from Outreach, Development, and Alumni may also contact JVs about writing, story-telling, and event support

Retreats

JVC Northwest calls JVs not only to social activism, but to reflect on and internalize what is learned through that activism, then return again to action. This practice of action and contemplation is called praxis in the Ignatian tradition. Prayerful reflection is encouraged throughout the entire service year and is more formally engaged in through the retreat program. Each of the two retreats happening in the fall and spring focus on different dimensions of the JV lifestyle and values and is designed to meet different needs of JVs at particular moments of the year. These times of renewal and reflection usually begin on a Friday and end on Monday, with the exception of most Montana retreats beginning on Thursday and ending on Sunday. This schedule allows time to slow down and rejuvenate, as well as time to reflect and share. Retreats are facilitated by non-JVC Northwest staff who may not always be very familiar with the program and/or the needs of each JV. Thus, retreats are co-created by the JVs, the facilitators and the Program Coordinator(s). Please note that your safety comes first and that if you are snowed in, or the roads are too icy to pass safely, you should let us know and stay safe/stay home.

Retreats for JVs of Color

In addition to programmatic wide retreats, JVC Northwest also offers two retreat opportunities throughout the year for self-identified People of Color* in the JVC Northwest program. The hope for this space is to invite folks to engage in retreat practice as a means of deepening awareness around racial identity formation and its role in social justice, community, spirituality, and solidarity. This retreat is held to foster nourishment and inspiration among JVs of Color, and intends to provide a safe and brave space to openly discuss the experience of living and navigating oppressive, racial, biased, social structures during a JV year, both in community and at service.

* Do you question identifying as POC? Are you examining or questioning your racial identity, mixed or multiracial, and/or ethnic identity in relation to how you show up in society and community? These retreats welcome you, and will hold space for you to explore these questions and more.

Dis-Orientation

The purpose of the closure process is to honor what has happened during the year, to say good-bye, to recognize the gifts received, to celebrate each other, and to consider how this year in JVC Northwest may influence life choices. The closure process is planned by JVs and takes place in individual communities. It occurs in the last month of the JV year, when a community is wrapping up the year. Your Program Coordinator will send materials to help you; you may want to ask your Support Persons to help facilitate the closure process.

Retreat Attendance

JVC Northwest asks that all JVs attend and participate in all retreats in their entirety as part of the program. JVC Northwest and Partner Agencies prioritize retreat investment for the personal formation and care of JVs. JVs receive two retreat days during retreat weekends, which are only to be used for attending retreat.

Optional Retreats

Optional retreats may be available during the year and are meant for reflection rather than just vacation; those held at other locations require forethought and reservations. Silent retreats are available throughout the year at many retreat centers. JVs are also encouraged to plan small community retreats and other reflective experiences. The staff will share resources and help connect JVs with people who can help plan and conduct these events.

Retreat Fees

All retreats are funded through JVC Northwest and agency fees, as well as partially funded through our AmeriCorps grant.

The Why behind Racial Affinity Groups

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest Program Team practices the value of Social Justice in multiple ways, in our internal work and with volunteers. Because race and oppression are inextricably linked in the United States and particularly in the Northwest our equity commitments center anti-racist and intercultural impact. The JVC Northwest program intends to help volunteers grow, including developing skills and deeper understanding of each person's role in dismantling racism and creating equitable communities and systems. The JV year is an opportunity to move beyond book smarts to self-awareness- to ask hard questions, accept hard truths, and practice living in ways that challenge oppressive structures and create a flourishing world for all.

The "why"

Racial affinity groups are one way to engage in anti-racism development during the JV program year. We gather white JVs and POC JVs into groups of shared background to provide space to bravely engage the personal, internal work required for dismantling racism. In these discussions, JVs can work together to envision wholeness and liberation, able and confident to connect authentically and appropriately across difference.

White affinity groups

JVC Northwest acknowledges that the program is historically white. Even today many white JVs begin the program year inexperienced in noticing and talking about their whiteness. Whiteness is often invisible to them as much as it is dominant and pervasive. Discussions with other white people allow white JVs to examine the culture, assumptions, and practice of their whiteness and face the impact of whiteness in our society, service, relationships, policies, roles, and communities. In a white-only space, white JVs can openly and freely share their questions and thoughts regarding race with reduced anxiety about offending people of color. White JVs can educate and hold each other accountable in affinity groups rather than depend upon POC JVs to do that for them. White affinity groups create brave space for JVs to move through the discomfort of awkward, naïve, micro-aggressive, or racist thoughts or comments, practice dismantling racist thoughts, beliefs, and actions, and work together on the attitudes and aptitudes of allyship.

People of Color affinity groups

In an affinity group JVs of color are momentarily separated from the taxing emotional labor required in predominantly white spaces where it is often expected that they censor speech or behavior, take care not to offend, absolve micro-aggressions, and educate their white peers. JVs who identify as POC and/or multiracial can connect about their experiences and offer one other support and understanding. After living in a predominantly white program and/or locale, participating in a POC space allows for checking in, reframing, and continuing identity affirmation and construction.

Other affinity groups

As a Program Team we prioritize affinity groups based on careful consideration, personal experience in similar opportunities, feedback from former JVs, and by recommendation of our equity consultants. Affinity groups can be used to create brave conversations regarding an array of topics and experiences, and we hope that JVs have many opportunities to consider aspects of their identity and its impact on themselves, others, and systems at large. Other opportunities could include conversations around ability, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, and other aspects of identity.

The Invitation

Dismantling the systemic racism in our U.S. culture and constructing equity in relationships, institutions, policy, and practice requires comprehensive strategies. Racial affinity groups are one strategy. We model the behavior we want to multiply in the world- decentering whiteness, normalizing conversation about race, mitigating harm, and collaborating on just and creative community thriving. As we do this, we maximize the impact and sustainability of the values that JVs practice during this year of service and carry them into the world. We invite you to embrace the affinity group experience to increase your capacity to live out the JVC Northwest core values.

Best Practices

Individual Practices

Change Your Driver's License or Get a State ID

In some states, this is a requirement if you have lived there for more than a certain number of days. It may also be a requirement for your placement agency. If your agency requires you to have an in-state license, they will pay or reimburse you for it. Be sure to save receipts! Check with the local Department of Motor Vehicles regarding local regulations. This is also a first step in establishing residency, if you choose to do so.

Consider Personal Property Insurance

On occasion, a JVC Northwest house has been broken into and personal items stolen. **We suggest that JVs not bring personal property of value. However, if you do, you may want to insure it against theft and fire.** The insurance that JVC Northwest carries for the JV houses, almost all of which are rented, covers liability but not personal possessions. If you have a loss during the year, JVC Northwest will not be able to replace your personal property. Ensure that each member of your community has a house key that is functional and establish good habits of securing your home.

Student Loans

It is your responsibility to apply for forbearance, deference, or to enroll in income-based repayment. Contact your loan provider to figure out the forms and process needed to manage your loans. It is important to pay attention to when your grace period ends and be on top of managing this financial responsibility. All JVs may want to explore income-based loan repayment for Federal Direct student loans. Learn more at

<http://www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org/repayment/federal-loans/payment-plans/income-based-options>.

If you are an AmeriCorps member:

Individuals in approved AmeriCorps positions are eligible for forbearance for most federally-guaranteed student loans. The Corporation for National and Community Service cannot approve or disapprove forbearance requests. JVC Northwest can only verify that the JV/AmeriCorps member is in an approved national service position. Only the loan holder can determine a person's loan's eligibility for forbearance. If a person does receive forbearance, AmeriCorps will pay the accrued interest AFTER the person completes their term of service. The most expedient way to apply for loan forbearance is to visit <https://my.AmeriCorps.gov>. **If you need more information, contact the AmeriCorps Program Manager at the JVC Northwest office.**

Obtain the necessary forms from each lending institution. Keep a record of all conversations you have with lenders, including the name of the person you speak with and the date. Ask your lender what your options are in suspending your loan. Consider economic hardship as an option for pausing or lowering the amount of your monthly loan payments.

Student loan forms: Generally, lenders accept your forms AFTER the volunteer year has started, and sometimes after the grace period has ended.

Open a Personal Bank Account

With our current financial structure, it is important for all Jesuit Volunteers to open a personal banking account to facilitate receiving funds from JVC Northwest and to conduct financial transactions. It will be most helpful to have the account at the same financial institution where your community account is held. **You are required to sign up for direct deposit for your monthly check.** JVC Northwest can do a direct deposit to multiple accounts, and we **strongly encourage** you to do an additional direct deposit to the community account. Another option is to set up an automatic monthly transfer of funds from your personal account to the community account.

Your Program Coordinator, Agency Supervisor, or Support Person may know of a bank that offers low or no cost, low-minimum-balance checking accounts. Upon request, your Program Coordinator can supply your community with a letter asking to waive fees. Consider opening an account at a local community bank or credit union—where you bank and who has access to your money is one of the most impactful justice decisions you can make!

Communal Practices

Safety

The JV year can be a huge adjustment for recent college grads who have primarily lived on gated campuses. JVs who have never previously worried about personal safety may now be concerned about a range of potential dangers. For example, JV houses are sometimes the target of opportunistic passersby. Keep your JV house safe: always lock the doors, including deadbolts; keep downstairs windows locked and shut when no one is home; clear your yard of rocks and bricks (that can be used for smashing windows), and furniture (that can be used to climb onto the roof/second floor); craft door chimes from string, old cans, and silverware – hang on your door knobs to alert you to comings and goings; maintain a neat yard so that your house looks lived-in; and request outdoor motion-sensor lights from your property owner/manager.

Another potential safety concern involves potential disasters – from home fires to earthquakes, forest fires, and floods. Research best practices for disasters specific to your locale. We have also included a \$5/mo./person community budget item that will help your community create and/or maintain emergency supplies. Learn more and take disaster preparation classes for free at your local American Red Cross chapter, <http://www.redcross.org/>. Check that your smoke detectors are still working in your house at least twice a year. A good practice is to change the batteries when you change your clocks in the fall and spring. If you don't see a carbon monoxide monitor or a fire extinguisher near your kitchen, please request one from your property owner/manager.

A final set of safety concerns JVs often have relate to personal safety when out and about in your locale. Personal safety involves mitigating risks from crime to heatstroke/dehydration to distracted driving. The best sources for information about how to stay safe locally is your local support network and local public safety websites. Additionally, consider walking in pairs, using well-lit streets, and keeping your wallet in inside pockets. Some JVs have felt safer in urban areas by taking self-defense classes and/or carrying hot pepper spray. If you have specific concerns, please reach out to your community mates, support persons, and program coordinator so that we can help problem-solve with you.

Social Media Considerations

You may choose to share stories, photos, and reflections about your JV year through social media outlets such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc., which can be a great way to share your experience with friends and family. If you do, please consider the content you post, as many JV applicants, donors, staff, and others can easily view things posted about JVC Northwest, your placement, and the people you interact with on the web. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Any photos posted of other people, especially minors, require written permission from them or their legal guardians before posting.
- Please be sensitive when sharing names/personal information about someone else. JVs bear witness and listen to clients' stories, however, remember it is their story to tell. Familiarize yourself with your agency's social media policy. When in doubt, check with your agency's policies on confidentiality and photo permission.
- If you choose to identify yourself as a Jesuit Volunteer on your blog or in a YouTube video, please include the following disclaimer: *The contents of this page, and all links appearing on this page, do not represent the positions, views or intents of Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest.*
- JVs are representing JVC Northwest and their agencies even when posting on a personal social media outlet – all information is public and affiliations with organizations may be known, even if not explicitly stated.
- JVC Northwest does not monitor JVs' social media accounts or posts, but we may see our name mentioned in a personal social media post and may contact you to praise your reflection, invite you to contribute to our blog, give you guidance about how to talk about your service responsibly, or ask you to update the content, if inappropriate.

It's all about judgment: using social media as an outlet to vent frustrations with the people you serve, your co-workers, JVC Northwest, our partner agencies, or our donors is not smart or professional. If you have suggestions for improvements at JVC Northwest or your partner agency, we invite you to start a conversation with the agency or a JVC Northwest staff member.

Considerations for Communal Decision-Making around Wi-Fi



Vehicle and Transportation Practices

JVC Northwest is dedicated to ensuring that JVs have self-sustaining means of transportation in all of our locales. As JVs live in solidarity with the communities they serve, they experience a wide variety of settings, climates, and access to public transit and agency vehicles. All of these factors and others can affect JV transportation options, leading to different transportation needs in each locale.

Embracing the values of community, spirituality/reflection, social & ecological justice, and simple living, we seek transportation options that are safe, environmentally conscious, and allow JVs to connect with the land and people in a way that limits impact on the earth and natural resources.

Bicycles

To the extent that you plan to bike during the year, we hope that you will bring, acquire, or use a bike that is in good shape, and use your personal transportation budget to pay for repairs, safety equipment such as lighting, reflectors, and helmet, and bike lock(s). When not in use, bikes do best when stored under a shelter, and upside down (resting on the seat and handlebars, rather than on tires which will dry rot) or hanging from a bike hook.

Personal vehicles

We expect that JVs will not bring a personal vehicle to their locale during the year. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis if a car is required by a placement, needed for a medical reason, or located in a community where safe, sustainable transportation options are still being developed. *Please consult with your Program Coordinator prior to acquiring a car in your locale.* JVC Northwest will continue to be in conversation with JVs, partner agencies, and support persons as we move towards self-sustaining modes of transportation for all of our locales.

Rural/remote locales and personal vehicles

It is the priority of JVC Northwest to ensure that JVs in rural and remote areas remain safe in their commutes to and from service. We allow JVs going to specific placements in rural/remote communities in the lower 48 to bring their vehicle for commute or other key purposes. If you have a question, concern, or request related to this policy, please contact your PC.

Expenses for vehicle payments, gas, maintenance, and upkeep (including tires, oil changes, etc.) are the responsibility of the JV/AmeriCorps member who owns the vehicle.

Vehicle use in the JV community:

- Vehicle owner(s) decide whether to share their vehicle with their community mates or not. They make the decision in consultation with their insurance policy, parents, and other stakeholders.
- JVC Northwest provides reflection questions for individual JV/AmeriCorps members and their communities to help discern car use. JVC Northwest provides sample group agreements related to car use.
- At/after orientation, if the vehicle owner(s) elect to allow the community share in the use or driving of the vehicle, the vehicle owner creates an agreement with community mates about permissible and impermissible vehicle use, and community contributions for gas, cleaning, and maintenance.
- We ask that JV/AmeriCorps member communities think clearly and critically about their vehicle use, and make every effort to find alternate transportation methods where possible, combine trips, carpool, and otherwise minimize personal vehicle use in order to uphold the values of social and ecological justice and simple living.

Vehicle use for service:

- If the JV/AmeriCorps member occasionally uses their personal vehicle for transportation related to service, they will request reimbursement according to the placement agency's reimbursement policy (usually gas or mileage).
- When a JV/AmeriCorps member uses their personal vehicle for service, they follow the partner agency's policies regarding transporting clients in their personal vehicles.

Vehicle use for JVC Northwest events:

If the JV community uses a JV's personal vehicle for transportation to or from JVC Northwest events such as orientation and retreats, JVC Northwest will reimburse the cost of gas. The vehicle owner should submit receipts for gas to the JVC Northwest Business Assistant, Sandy Parker, at busassist@jvcnorthwest.org as soon as possible after the trip.

Civic Participation

Voting and Civic Engagement

Whether you register in your new locale or still vote through your home state, we encourage you to remain civically engaged. To learn how register to vote in your new locale, visit <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>.

In addition to voting, we strongly encourage you to visit and listen at community meetings in your locale. Consider attending at least three meetings such as city council meetings, neighborhood association meetings, rotary meetings. What are the structures of leadership and influence in your locale? Who are the decision makers? What are they talking about? Use what you learn to reflect on social and environmental justice.

JV/AmeriCorps members must abide by the AmeriCorps rules related to “prohibited activities” -- activities which cannot occur during service hours. However, you have the right to exercise your rights as private citizens. Please ensure any and all advocacy and political engagement (or any other prohibited activity) are:

- On non-AmeriCorps time;
- Not using funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service; and
- Not wearing the AmeriCorps logo.

Taxes

For JV AmeriCorps members, your entire living allowance is considered income by the IRS and is taxable. How you filled out the W-2 enrollment form and how much money (if any) you made before becoming a JV will determine how much you owe in taxes. If, at Orientation, you chose not to claim any deductions, then taxes should be taken out of your living allowance before it gets to you. If you chose to claim some deductions, then you may have to pay taxes on your living allowance at some point during the year and may want to save each month toward this payment. After your term of service, your Education Award is taxable during the year it is applied toward educational expenses.

There is a free online platform through the IRS that you can use to file your taxes. Be sure to file every year by April 15th. You are responsible for local and state taxes as well.

Housing Practices

House Maintenance

Please familiarize yourself with the house and ask questions of the property owner/manager during a walk-through of the house in the first week of your arrival. Each house has unique layout, issues and practices. Be sure to maintain communication with the property manager/landlord throughout the year for upkeep or emergent house issues.

Oil Heat

- Set up a regular schedule for contacting your property owner/manager or oil company to fill tanks.
- During winter, check oil level often prior to refill date to avoid running out/damaging the furnace.

Mildew and Mold

- Run the fan in the bathroom during all showers and for at least 20 minutes afterwards.
- Wipe down shower and tub walls/grooves with vinegar or bleach solution at least every 2 weeks.
- Monitor window fixtures for signs of mold – black spots on window frames. Scrub moldy spots with hot water, detergent, and a scratchy sponge. Treat it with vinegar or alcohol to prevent re-growth.
- Keep heat a minimum of 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Yard maintenance/snow management

- Maintain your house mower throughout the year. If repairs or a replacement is needed, JVs will pay for this through their “House Supplies” budget.
- Keep lawn mowed, especially in the spring. For some communities, this might mean paying for the upkeep of the lawn.
- Keep lawn watered, especially during hot/dry months in your locale.
- Keep plants trimmed and clear of sidewalk.
- Clear out any dead plant material including leaves from the yard.

Winter Considerations

- Pipes – when you are at risk of pipes freezing:
 - Cover all outdoor faucets with freeze caps.
 - Leave indoor faucet at a slight drip (catch water in a bucket to re-use).
 - Open any cupboards or coverings over pipes in the house to let in the warmth.
- Weatherizing
 - Cover all windows with plastic sheeting and duct tape.
 - Keep drapes closed, drape towels and blankets over windows.
 - Seal windows and cracks with putty.
 - Place towels along bottoms of windows and doors.
 - Cover outdoor faucets with freeze caps.
- Snow
 - Keep sidewalks and pathways shoveled and clear.
 - Spread sand, salt, and/or cat litter on sidewalks to melt ice and improve traction.
 - Keep shoes and boots in area by the door on an absorbent rug.

Smoke detectors/fire extinguishers

- Check smoke detectors every 6 months.
- Replace batteries every year on the 4th of July.
- Locate fire extinguisher, confirm that it is full, check its last maintenance date, and review instructions.

Stovetop – to avoid risk of fire

- Clean and maintain fan fixture above stove.
- Keep coil trays clear of food and crumbs.
- Not everything that goes in the oven can go on the stove and vice versa. Use safe cookware on stovetops.

- Keep lids and hot pads close at hand to extinguish flare ups and to place hot items on.

Utilities

- Ensure your names are on the utility bill by August 31 and help to add the next year's JVs' names by July 31.
- Pay all utility bills on time.
- Look to reduce costs and resources by limiting water use and keeping heat at minimal level (while still warm enough to avoid mold buildup and frozen pipes).
- Further reduce costs and keep house warm: see Weatherizing.
- **If the budgeted amount does not cover bill, your community is responsible for covering extra costs.**
- Each JV community house maintains a house phone and pays for it out of common utility fees.

House Keys

- Lock your doors at all times.
- If your house door has a deadbolt lock, USE IT!
- Please provide a house key to your Program Coordinator during the area visit if they need one and follow their instructions for transitioning your house keys to the next group of JVs at the end of the year.

Beds – to prevent mold and pests

- Keep mattresses and blankets off of floors and ON bed frames.
- Keep beds at least six inches from walls.
- If you are exposed to bedbugs, take your shoes off outside the house and spray them with alcohol. Wash your clothes, bedding, towels, etc. on high heat, then put through the dryer on high heat two times. Bag them and keep them separate from any suspected infected areas until the space has been evaluated.
- Bedbugs are costly, uncomfortable and can be hard to get rid of. In order to be proactive and prevent the spread of bedbugs into the JV house, please watch the bedbug video waiting for you at your house **by August 31**. Please let your PC know if you need a new copy.

Broader Community Practices

Being a Neighbor

JVs not only experience community with their housemates but also with local neighbors, as well as the broader locale. We try to locate JV communities in places that offer you rich opportunities to engage in a cross-cultural experience with people of varying racial, religious and socio-economic status. In some cases, this will require you to step out of your comfort zone to engage with someone who brings up discomfort in you. These are the moments of challenge and growth that are hallmarks of the JV experience. JVs that choose to make direct contact with local neighbors and members of the broader community often underline this as one of the most transformative aspects of the program. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to get to know your neighbors and to honor the guidelines listed below.

Good Neighbor Guidelines

When you move into your new house, you will be moving into an established community with neighbors who in some cases have called that place home for decades. It is important to remember that you are a guest and that it may be difficult for some neighbors to adjust to having new neighbors every year. Here are some best practices on how to be a respectful and responsible guest in your greater neighborhood community:

- Introduce yourself to neighbors with a friendly chat, a note, or some baked goods in order to get to know them.
- Give your contact information to your neighbors so that they have a way to be in touch with you and to voice any concerns directly with you.
- Host a potluck during your first month in the house – invite neighbors, support people, placement site colleagues, Jesuits, and other community members.
- When someone stops by for a visit, please stop what you are doing, welcome them in, offer them a place to sit and some water or tea.
- The value of community extends beyond your JV community and applies to many relationships in your greater locale community. Take part in neighborhood, citizen, and town meetings, Rotary club and other forums. Listen. What is important to the people gathered? Who is part of the conversation? Who is missing from the conversation?
- Though this is your home for the year, remember that it will be someone else's home next year. Your actions will affect future JVs' relationships with your neighbors as well as our reputation. You are coming in the name of volunteering, nonprofit work, and the Jesuits; your community will likely hold you to higher standards than an average recent college graduate. If you work with youth, know that you are a role model in all that you do.
- Read your lease. It is a fundamental program requirement that you uphold the lease.
- Maintain the area around your home so that it is neat and attractive (i.e. water and mow the lawn, trim trees and bushes, pick up trash, etc.).
- Be conscientious about noises that might disturb your neighbors such as loud radios and elevated voices. Observe quiet hours – we recommend that after 9 or 10 pm, JVs cease loud outdoor activities. Your neighbors or property owners may request an earlier time for quiet hours.
- Take into account the impact parties have on both the JV community and the local neighborhood. As JVs, you take responsibility for modeling stewardship of your neighborhood. Therefore, please end parties at a reasonable hour and be conscientious about their frequency. Be sure to invite neighbors that you would like to attend in advance and inform all neighbors of the date and time of your party so they can be prepared. Respect your neighbors' privacy.
- As you are comfortable and able to balance community commitments, offer to collect mail and water plants while your neighbors are away.
- **Pet-sitting/house-sitting:** you may be asked to house- or pet- sit at someone's home. If you are asked, talk about it with your community, as it removes people from community for a time. Also please note that it is part of the JVC Northwest Covenant that you do not receive additional sources of money including from pet- and house-sitting. If, on infrequent occasion, one of you sits, please uphold your community responsibilities by continuing to show up for community night, spirituality/reflection night and your house business meeting.

Spring Break/Service Immersion Trips

Over the course of the year, your community may be contacted about hosting an alternative spring break or service trip. There is a great history and tradition of JVs being part of these immersions and sharing their experience with current college students. If you are contacted, please talk it over as a community, and, if you like, call JVC Northwest to talk it

over with your Program Coordinator. You should feel free to decline the request. If your community says yes, the responsibilities could be minimal, such as hosting a dinner for the group or inviting them to a community night; or your responsibilities could be more involved, such as providing a list of agencies where students could serve, being available to the group, or serving as a tour guide or welcoming committee. It is important that your community be on the same page regarding the commitment. Being part of a service/immersion trip is invaluable to helping spread the Ignatian spirit. Perhaps you attended one yourself and found it valuable! It's also a great way to recruit potential JVs. That said, please do not feel obligated to say yes. Really discern if this is something your community could commit to thoughtfully. If you decide to help with or be part of an immersion, please let JVC Northwest know.

Health of Community Mates

A year in JVC Northwest can be stressful and overwhelming at times. JVs experience people in their greatest need, hear their stories, and hold a space of compassion for them. In addition, community living brings new challenges and invites us to engage even more energy at home. This experience requires each of us *to pay attention to ourselves and each other* in order to ensure everyone's health and safety. Below are some helpful hints for how to identify and respond to some of the critical issues which could potentially arise in your community.

When stress becomes a critical issue: Key Signs

Disordered Eating

- Binge eating, followed by vomiting or laxatives (or not)
- Refusal to eat anything
- Excessive exercise
- Quick and excessive loss of body weight
- Obsessive-compulsive behavior

Depression

- Changes to eating and sleeping patterns
- Lessening of interest in daily activities
- Feelings of worthlessness and/or complete loneliness
- Diminished ability to think and concentrate
- Strong emotions of anger, euphoria, and/or sadness

Alcohol/Substance Abuse

- Drinking/drugs to deal with emotions
- Drinking/drugs alone
- Excessive drinking/drugs, blackouts
- Drinking/drugs take precedence over service at the agency/community

Suicide

- Feelings of despair and hopelessness
- Discussion of specific suicide methods, rehearsing suicide
- Withdrawal from community, conversation, interaction with others
- Winding up personal affairs
- Offering beloved personal items as gifts to others

* A sudden improvement in attitude and humor after a long period of depression often signifies that a suicide is imminent. Don't take this as a good sign; seek immediate assistance.

How to respond to a critical issue:

- Avoid passing judgment.
- Check in with the person at risk:
 - I've noticed you seem stressed. How are you doing?
 - Would you like to talk about it?
 - Who do you have to support you through this?
- Inform your Support Persons and Program Coordinator.
- Familiarize yourself with local resources. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

If YOU are in need of support:

National Eating Disorders Association
confidential

Helpline: 800-931-2237, Mon-Thurs, 9a-9p
EST; Fri, 9a-5p EST.

The U.S Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration's toll-free phone
number for alcohol and drug information/
treatment referral assistance: 800-662-4357.

The U.S Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration's toll-free phone
number for alcohol and drug information/
treatment referral assistance: 800-662-4357.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-
273-TALK (8255); TTY: 1-800-799-4889.

Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network
national hotline 800-656-HOPE will connect
you to a rape crisis phone counselor in your
area. Also, it is a great idea to call your local
authorities!

Communal Living

"If we are going to use the word (community) meaningfully, we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to honestly communicate with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, make other's conditions their own."

M. Scott Peck, Community and Peacemaking

Characteristics of Healthy Communities

Living in and working at community is a commitment each person makes when becoming a JV. Exploring the depths of community requires time and energy. History has shown that the most "successful" communities took on some structures and that community members committed time and energy to the exploration of the meaning of community. Strong communities help our walk in social and ecological justice to be more balanced, authentic and hopeful. Community is yours to create; the following characteristics of healthy communities can serve as suggestions for building your own JVC Northwest community.

- **Establish common bonds.** Working for justice, living in community, living simply, and exploring communal and personal spirituality or development are common areas where community members can support one another.
- **Pray or Reflect Together** - Reflect together on the interactions and events that you experienced in your day. You may share inspirational readings, have quiet time and offer prayers of thanks and support during meals and free time. Regular community prayer and reflection strengthens relationships, helps create a community identity and builds a foundation of trust which can sustain a community through difficult times.
- **Acceptance/Celebration of each other's differences.** We all have different personalities. Each of us has gifts to offer. Take time to share your talents and discover the gifts of others.
- **Regularly scheduled community meetings.** Regular meetings keep communication open and allow the group to process decisions. See "Approaches to Community Meetings" for ideas on community meetings.
- **Community dinners.** Regularly scheduled dinners build relationships, allow for sharing of experiences, and keep communication lines open. Rotating cooks allows people to share their tastes and talents.
- **Open communication.** In order to have healthy community, the channels of communication must be kept open. You may need to learn new communication skills since people communicate differently. In many ways, healthy communication is counter-cultural. Communication skills and tools will be revisited on area visits and retreats.
- **Intentional 1-on-1 time.** Create a system or schedule so that each community mate spends 1-on-1 time with each mate. Developing a 1:1 relationship early makes conversations, requests, or tension easier to address in the future.
- **Learn each other's boundaries.** Different people have different thresholds for sensory intake, particularly touch. One way to help navigate this as you build community is to use the touch scale. The touch scale is a scale from 1-10 of how comfortable you are with platonic touch – hugs, arm squeezes, standing close, etc. 1 would be for someone who prefers not to be touched and does not like to give or receive hugs, whereas 10 would be for someone who is very open to giving and receive hugs and being in close contact with others. The scale can also be used to explain how relating to touch changes as you build relationship – for instance, "When I first meet someone, I'm a 3, but when I get to know someone better and feel comfortable, I move up to a 7." How can you use the scale to discuss other ways to establish sensory and non-sensory boundaries?
- **Play!** Hang out together! It is necessary to have times for the community to play together and enjoy each other. Spontaneity is one of the keys to success, and you may need to plan time to be spontaneous.
- **Shared daily needs.** Rotating chores prevents a feeling of "getting stuck" with certain responsibilities. Maintaining a clean and comfortable environment goes a long way in making the JV house a home.
- **Outside support.** Friends, Program Coordinators, parish, Support Persons, and FJVs can be important members of the "extended family" of the community.
- **Individual time.** Take time to do your own thing. Balance your needs and the needs of community.
- **Confidentiality.** Some community business belongs only to the community. Clarify in your house meetings what is to be shared outside of community and what is not.
- **Disclosure.** If an issue of safety and well-being arises in the community, such as a JV with an eating disorder or depression, or who talks about suicide, you should share this information as soon as possible with a trusted person in your locale and your Program Coordinator.

Community Roles

Community Bookkeepers

Each JV community designates **two** of its members to serve as co-bookkeepers. They are responsible for keeping accurate financial records, for making timely deposits of community income, paying community bills on time, reporting financial issues to JVC Northwest, informing housemates about the community financial situation, and making monthly financial reports for the JVC Northwest Business Manager. However, the JV community is collectively responsible for making all decisions about expenditures. Any problems with finances should be reported to the Program Coordinator and/or the JVC Northwest office.

House Liaison

A House Liaison is responsible for being the main point of contact to JVC Northwest staff related to housing and property manager issues, AmeriCorps communications, and sharing community photos and stories. They will serve as the communication channel between their community and the landlord for, and will communicate any house maintenance issues and property owner/manager concerns to their PC as soon as those issues are known. The liaison will also receive e-mails, snail mail and phone calls from the PC and be responsible for posting and communicating the information for others to read. They will also be the main contact to review, understand, and share any AmeriCorps related communications that have been received from the JV AmeriCorps office each month. The liaison will act as the main point of contact for sharing photos and stories throughout the year, which includes taking and submitting community and service photos to JVC Northwest each month.

If the Program Coordinator or JVs decide that the liaison role is not a great fit for the serving JV's skillset, they may recruit another community mate to support or take over the role.

Business Meetings

Meetings are an essential part of the community experience. Many objectives can be achieved at meetings: finding out how people are doing at their placements, planning a gathering, airing differences about what kind of cereal should be purchased, praying together, and more. It is a structured time that can be used to present to the community different problems or good experiences which otherwise might not get discussed. Small problems can remain small if they are discussed early enough. Here are some suggestions your community might want to incorporate.

- **Regular meeting night:** Set a regularly scheduled night and stress the importance of all community members being present. This is a commitment which will facilitate the opportunity for open communication.
- **Facilitator:** Have a facilitator and rotate the role. This gives everyone a chance to practice the skill of facilitating.
- **Agenda:** Post an agenda in advance which includes a topic, the person presenting it, and the amount of time needed to talk about the topic sufficiently.
- **Set an ending time.** Everyone can be more attentive if they know how long the meeting will last.
- **Action planning.** Decide on specific action items from the community meeting. Who? What? When? How?
- **Minutes.** Have someone take and keep track of the minutes from each meeting. They are good for future reference about who will do which chores, how much money was allotted for utilities for the month, and other discussed items. These can be detailed, put more informally on butcher paper, in a community meeting minute notebook, or some other method that works for the community. Keep these notes in a public place so anyone can refer to them when wanting a reminder about community decisions.
- **Turn phone ringers off and turn down the volume on the answering machine!** Turn off your cell phones and don't bring them to community or spirituality nights, dinners, meetings, or other communal gatherings. The phone can become quite a disruption so let those phones go to voicemail and you can return calls after.
- **Check-ins.** At the beginning of each meeting let people air how they are feeling; perhaps they have had a lousy day and really don't want to be at the meeting. This is good to know; if a touchy subject comes up, the group will at least be aware of the person's disposition and can present the problem accordingly. Some suggested check-in questions and structures: Highs and Lows of the day; high, low, buffalo (something random); what's giving you life right now? what are blocks?
- **Resentments or Blocks.** At the beginning of the meeting ask if anyone has any resentment that they feel would hinder the process of the community meeting. Use your judgment to decide if the problem should be resolved during the meeting or at a later time.
- **Proceed with your meeting.** Be sure to read the three suggested strategies for making sure everyone's voice is represented.
- **Review action items.** The note taker should recap last week's notes to ensure that mates are following up on action items. If an action wasn't completed, it is added to the current week's action items.
- **Affirmations-** This is one way in which a community can close a house meeting. Some meetings do get emotional, yet we all have to live together. The person that got chewed out for leaving the dishes in the sink would probably appreciate a compliment for taking the garbage out regularly or perhaps one of your community members is working very hard at their placement. We need support from one another to make the JVC Northwest experience successful!

These are suggestions we found that worked. By the time your year is over, you will be able to add your own suggestions. Once again, we encourage you to have these regularly scheduled meetings to avoid crisis, keep in touch with community mates with busy schedules, and add a sense of continuity, and so that you don't meet only when there is a crisis.

Ensuring Everyone's Voice is Heard

When the community is in a decision-making situation that needs to be talked out, such as where to go for a weekend away, there are many methods to getting everyone's voice heard. This is important for the person who does not regularly express an opinion. The unexpressed opinion can be the most problematic, for a person can build resentments even when choosing not to express an opinion. Here are three suggestions for getting everyone's stand on an issue:

100%

Before the problem is discussed, everyone expresses what the outcome of the decision would be if their dream came true. After all dreams are heard, at least the group has an understanding of what the other group members want in a non-threatening atmosphere. There is no guarantee that each member will get 100% of what they want, but it allows each person to feel heard.

Fist to Five

When it comes time to make a consensus decision on an important house issue, this is a good way to get people's feedback on their feelings. When raising your hand on an issue, five fingers outstretched means you are strongly in favor of the decision, zero fingers (a fist) means you are strongly against, and the increments in between denote feeling gradations.

It is important to allow those who were strongly opposed to a decision (zero fingers) the decision the opportunity to explain why and for the group to come to a decision with which everyone can live. In other words, everyone will support the decision even if they would have preferred something else. "Majority rules" may save time but may alienate and divide the community. Important community decisions should, whenever possible, be arrived at by this means. However, to use this method for every decision can make community a painstaking process. We encourage you to discern wisely the use of consultative and discernment methods of decision-making for other less significant decisions.

Thumbs

When asking for "thumbs," everyone offers one of three options: a thumbs up (sounds great), thumbs sideways (I need more information), or a thumbs down (I'm not interested). Similar to fist to five, it's not a "majority rules" method, but a way to "take the temperature." Once everyone has an idea of how others in the meeting are feeling, the conversation progresses from there.

Spirituality and Community Night Worksheet*

Orienting Questions:

What do you hope will come from this Spirituality or Community Night?

What one or two ideas are most interesting for you to explore?*

**Circle your top idea before moving on to plan

MATERIALS NEEDED:

***If your community mates will need to bring or do anything ahead of time, be sure to tell them at least a few days before Community or Spirituality Night.

Outline:

1. Designate a facilitator and timekeeper
2. Check-in
3. Introduce and lead activity
4. Share reflections and observations
5. Check out or Closing

CHECK IN (4-10 min.)

- Begin with a check-in to set the space and gather a sense of how each person is entering your time together. Some check-in prompts include:
 - High, low, buffalo (something random on your mind from the day or week)
 - If you were a plant today, what would you be and why?
 - Name one gratitude for the day and one sadness

INTRODUCE and LEAD ACTIVITY (30-40 min.)

- Description of activity, including how you wish to structure the time (Mutual invitation, popcorn style, go-around starting with the oldest community mate, etc.)
-
-
-
-
-

SHARE BACK (10-20 min.)

- One at a time, share any reflections, observations, themes, key moments, or creations from your activity
How will you invite sharing? _____

CLOSE by sharing a poem, offering a prayer, or posing a check-out prompt (2-5 min.)

Poem, prayer, or prompt you plan to use: _____

**There is no right way to hold a Spirituality or Community Night. This is only one suggestion of how to begin. You are welcome and encouraged to embrace your creativity in making communal space this year.*

86 Ways to Build Community!

Offered by Staff and JVs present at "Community Tools" - Orientation 2017

Set (and Respect) Your Boundaries

- Make a Community Agreement and post it in the house
- Establish standards and boundaries early so that people begin to feel comfortable and know each others' limits
- Before a trip, make a list of thing you would and would not like to see happen; i.e. positive learning environment, road trip playlist, or quiet time vs. negativity, camp songs, or excess cursing

Give the Benefit of the Doubt

- Assume positive intentions
- Allow yourself to imagine or consider that the person you are in conflict with could be correct
- Enter with generosity and curiosity



Cultivate Tenderness

- Bake mates treats they can take to service with them to brighten their day
- "Secret buddies" – Draw or assign a secret buddy to each mate to leave nice notes or treats to say "hey, I'm thinking of you."
- Give "Warm Fuzzies" – words or notes of encouragement
- Make a Gratitude Wall (and use it!)
- Affirmations– Share appreciation for your mates. Why is this person is vital to your community?
- Do weekly acts of random kindness
- Add "shout outs " to your Community Meeting agenda
- "Give-and-Take" Circle: Focusing on one person at a time, everyone takes turns saying one or two things they see that mate give and feel they can take from that person
- "Guardian Angels" - Each person has a mate they are meant to secretly look out for during community time

Try New Things

- Be willing to try new things
- "I would love to try skiing and I think it would be a good bonding experience with my community mates."
- Train together; run a 5k (or a marathon!)
- Learn a new skill or pick up a new hobby together—knitting, cycling, juggling, etc.
- Explore a new place together
- Eat each others' cooking
- Learn to make kombucha, bread, or yogurt
- Develop a community mission/ daily challenges or intentions
- Set solidarity goals
- Do values challenges together – "one song showers," energy-fast nights, etc.
- Plant a garden

Get Silly

- Have a Game Night!
 - Laugh and laugh often – create spaces for humor
 - Use cheesy ice breakers to start off each meeting
 - Write down funny community moments or quotes
 - Have a fancy formal, tea party, or theme night
 - Hold a dance party (spontaneous or planned)
 - Have a scavenger hunt
 - Tell Jokes

Move Together

- Do an active activity led by one person each week
- Practice yoga
- Go for a hike
- Plan a camping trip
- Go for bike rides
- Do a community workout
- Form a kickball team
- Coach peewee soccer
- Take one-on-one walks

Share Yourselfes

- Share songs that are important to you and explain why
- Do a candle reflection where a facilitator proposes a few questions and everyone shares
- Poetry Night – everyone memorizes and shares a poem that is meaningful to them
- Share photos to help tell your stories
- Have a Show and Tell night, sharing stories of significant objects in your lives
- Give presentations on people who are important and loved in your lives using digital or physical photos
- Ask if everyone is comfortable showing off their rooms then take a tour of the entire house and talk about why you decorated your room the way you did and whether anything in particular is special to you
- (Consensual) sharing of (your own) embarrassing stories
- Share favorite stories about each other
- “Step into the circle” - Allows vulnerability, space to share identities, and find commonalities with mates
- Draw your life maps
- Make Identity Wheels or Identity Maps

Get Creative

- Paint canvases to decorate the living room
- Make homemade candles
- Art Nights: painting, improv comedy, music jams
- Make window art you can peel off and stick onto windows
- Create a community art piece where each person draws something and builds off the artist before them
- Make a community music video!
- Play music/sing together
- Gather paint supplies and paint along with a Bob Ross video

Check In

- Check in with one another daily or weekly; make it part of community meals, meetings, or other gatherings.

Examples:

- High, low, buffalo (something random to share)
- Personal weather status
- Rose, bud, & thorn

Use your Tools

- Share your Hogwarts Houses
- Do and discuss the Enneagram!
- Share sacred practices and set aside a time for meditative reflection
- “There is a New York Times article on 36 questions to connect with someone. The idea is if both partners answer them all honestly they will fall in love. I don’t know if that is true, but I do think it is a good resource.” Try it out!
- Take the Myers-Briggs test and invite everyone to share about their type.
- Learn your Love Languages

Break Bread

- Eat & prepare meals together
 - Set a dinner time
- Community cooking night: share family recipes or comfort food
- Literally bake bread (and then eat it together).
Yum!

- Make a community playlist
- Write a prayer, letter, or poem for a fellow community member

Take the Time

- Read a book aloud “popcorn” style or by taking turns
- Plan community outings and trips together
- Have a campfire (with s’mores!)
- Free Share – each person has 10min to share whatever they would like while everyone else truly listens (Be sure to set guidelines for making a safe and brave space for all)
- (Consensual) morning and evening hugs
- Create some sort of ritual/ surprise for community birthdays (like a small gift, treat, signs, or affirmation circle)
- Host a potluck
- Do social advocacy together
- Volunteer together
- Hold Clearness Committees (for supporting individuals in discernment)

Navigating Equity in Community

JV Communities are made up of unique people with diverse perspectives and identities. In diverse communities there are many equity issues that create privilege and power dynamics. Some of these dynamics are race, socioeconomic status, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, and religion, while there are many others. Individual JVs hold many identities at the same time, some which are privileged, and others which are marginalized. In discussions of social justice, community events, daily life together, and service placements, we invite you to explore how power and privilege are at work. Safe, thriving communities are those that initiate and engage in conversations about each of these dynamics and their intersections. These types of conversations can be difficult to engage in, so we encourage you to use the following information as a basic framework to get you started. While the paragraphs that follow are about race in particular, they provide a useful template and language for approaching other inequities that tend to be unrecognized and inherent in our communities, as well.

Ground Rules for talking about Race

Speaking about race in your intentional community can be singularly stressful. Here are some ground rules.

- Racism is real, and the United States is founded on racist structures (white people's kidnapping people from their families in West Africa and enslaving them, for example; white people's creating structures and laws that have erected barriers for people of color related to education and amassing intergenerational wealth like redlining and segregation.)
- Reverse racism does *not* exist. Racism is power + prejudice. Even if a person of color feels hostility toward a white person, based completely on their skin color, that hostility doesn't come with the full force of U.S. history, culture, and law.
- It is *not* the job of the people of color in the community to educate white JVs about race or racism, nor is it their job to represent all the people of their race in conversations about social justice, racism, etc. White JVs, please look to resources such as the organization Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) to educate yourself about race and racism; read books, talk to other white people who understand more than you, etc.
- Listen to the experiences of JVs of color – expect that their experiences will differ from yours (sometimes or frequently) and that you should believe in and validate their experiences and perspectives. Your role is listen, hear, believe, and be transformed through believing. Avoid comparing your experiences, playing devil's advocate to their perspectives, and pointing out to them where their notions are incorrect.
- Often, white people intentionally or unintentionally use defensiveness or sensitivity about race issues as a strategy to shut down frank conversations about race. This is called White Fragility and it is detrimental in a number of areas, including your community.
- Interrupt micro aggressions. Micro aggressions are offensive comments spoken to people of color. If you are a white JV, your jobs are to: 1) not commit micro aggressions, 2) identify micro aggressions when you hear them and then 3) interrupt them.
- Related: If you are a white person, it is not your job to decide what *is* or *is not* offensive to a person of color.
- Speak from your own experience – without judgement. Watch trigger words like “why” as in, “Why would you say that?” Even if your tone is meant to be neutral, it's easy to hear “why” as judgmental. Try “What has you say that?” instead.
- Support the learning of others, and stay curious. Replace judgment with curiosity as in, “What has you say that?” instead of “What is that supposed to mean?” or “I can't believe you just said that!”
- Embrace paradox. Two things can be equally true even though they appear opposite on the surface.
- Expect discomfort. Take some deep breaths; notice where you feel uncomfortable.
- Commit to starting with compassion.
- If your JV community is struggling to have eye-to-eye conversations about race, please let your Program Coordinator know that you all need help. It is not the job of the JVs of color in your house to facilitate racial dialogue in the house.
- What other ground rules would your community add?

Shared Vocabulary

Here is a working list of words we use in the JVC Northwest office when we speak about race and equity. We thought you and your community could benefit from these terms as well. In fact, learning these words together could be a meaningful community activity! Consider the terms your community would add to this list. Discuss questions or reactions you have to these definitions. These terms were taught to us and defined by Jen Lleras and Angus Maguire.

<i>Power</i>	Power is the ability to get what you want by making a decision or influencing an outcome. Power is neutral until it is used. You can have power WITH or power OVER.
<i>Racism</i>	The systems, interactions, and stories that maintain a white supremacist society. - In everyday language - In policy - In how we relate to one another and define our value - In the act or threat of violence
<i>Gender</i>	A social and political category assigned to people based on a set of unrelated characteristics. This definition is based entirely on the assumption and assertion that there are only two genders: male and female. Gender assumes that biology is destiny.
<i>Race</i>	A social and political category assigned to people based on a set of unrelated characteristics. Created and changed over time to maintain power for white people.
<i>People of Color</i>	An umbrella term that unites people who are not categorized as white, as a strategy to build political power.
<i>Whiteness</i>	An umbrella term developed to maintain the power and inequities that result from a white supremacist society. Whiteness is a political construct.
<i>Dominant Culture</i>	Culture refers to the established norms, language, religion, values, rituals, and social customs. The dominant culture is a culture that is the most powerful, widespread, or influential in a context in which multiple cultures are present.
<i>Privilege</i>	An unearned advantage experienced because the stories, rules and resources are stacked in your favor. Privilege results in both situational and cumulative outcomes.
<i>Oppression</i>	The collective experience and outcomes for individuals and groups who are targets and victims of dominant cultures. Policing and maintaining of dominant culture produces specific outcomes that are observable and measurable.

Resources

We will offer you resources throughout the year, beginning with Orientation. If you desire additional resources, please take a look at what you already have and then reach out to your Program Coordinator.

Interrupting Microaggressions

This is one process you might want to try to interrupt microaggressions – also suggested to us by Jen Lleras and Angus Maguire.

You can remember it by the acronym QUEST:

Q

• Ask **Questions** with genuine curiosity. Look for shared values

U

• **Unpack it.** Show how the comment connects to larger systems or potential outcomes; what if everyone thought that way?

E

• **Expose Assumptions.** What are some underlying beliefs that would lead to such a comment?

S

• **Seek common ground.** Talk about shared values and create a safe space, absent of us vs. them binaries.

T

• **Tell stories.** Share a story or a personal truth that relates to the microaggression.

Reach out to Us

We are working on equity here at JVC Northwest. The board and staff have prioritized equity, anti-oppression, and antiracism as a Strategic Direction. Our staff are engaged in regular meetings and conversations about equity in the running of the organization and our programs. Social justice is one of our core values, and so we see all of our efforts to establish JVC Northwest as an equitable and antiracist organization as one way we live out that value.

Because equity is vitally important, we *want* to hear from you about your experiences, and where we could do better. Please let your Program Coordinator, the JV Program Manager, or the Director of Programs know what is working for you and where we could do better. Ask us what resources we are aware of for people of color and other identities in your locale, and/or let us know the resources you find helpful – and that future JVs will find helpful as well.

JV Frequently Asked Questions

I've been called for Jury Duty. What do I do?

If you've been called for the state in which you are serving as a JV, then talk to your Supervisor and make arrangements to go. If you were called for a state you previously lived in, then call them and let them know where you are currently living.

My bike broke/was stolen. What do I do?

The bike supplies at JV houses are donated items, so JVC Northwest does not have a process for replacing or repairing them. See if your community or support people know of any potential mechanics or donations. You do have transportation funds budgeted per month, so you can save that money to use toward bike expenses, as well.

Can you reimburse my car's mileage instead of just gas?

No, JVC Northwest reimburses gas.

What do I do about my medical co-pay?

If you are an independent JV, pay for the co-pay up front and then send the receipt to the office for reimbursement as soon as possible. Please do not save them up until the end of the year. If you are an AmeriCorps member, use your contingency funds to pay for the co-pay. If any JV is struggling to pay for necessary medical expenses, please contact the Program Coordinator or JV Program Manager.

Can I receive care packages as a JV?

Yes, but please consider how the frequency or contents of care packages may hinder your experience of living out the four values. Care packages can highlight differences in socio-economic class, cultural expectations, familial relations, support networks, and other dynamics. Care packages can also keep JVs from truly living off of the monthly stipend.

I (or my supervisor) want(s) to do something not in my Position Description. Can I do it?

If the request is in the spirit of your role or the agency, we ask JVs to respond to the greatest needs of the organization. This might mean sometimes completing tasks that are not directly named in your position description, but would fall within the general realm of your role at the agency. For any long term changes to your position description (longer than a week) or if you are asked to complete a task that is Prohibited or Unallowable, contact your Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

How does Worker's Compensation work?

JVC Northwest offers Worker's Compensation for all JVs. If something happens while you are at service, contact your Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

Do I have to go to retreat?

Retreats are a benefit of the JV program (that you will not always have!). JVC Northwest asks that as members of our program all JVs attend all JV retreats. Agencies, JVs, and JVC Northwest all agree to prioritize attendance at retreats in the Placement Agreement. Retreat days do not count towards your ten leave days.

Am I allowed to go to a conference/training?

Yes! JVs are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Coordinate and negotiate your participation with your supervisor.

Our house has an issue. How do we submit a work order?

Contact your Property Manager. If JVC Northwest owns your house, you can utilize the Business Assistant as a liaison.

Can I travel home for the holidays? Can I go on a cruise with my family?

JVC Northwest does not dictate how you spend your 10 vacation days. However, we do ask that JVs are intentional about living out the values throughout the entire year, and consider opportunities for solidarity among clients, students, community mates, neighbors, and others that JVs are in community with during the JV year. JVs are asked to live off of the stipend and decline funds from outside resources, including family members.

What do I do about my Grad School/Med School Interviews?

You can coordinate the use of your 10 vacation days with your supervisor. If you are an AmeriCorps member, you will need to exceed 1700 hours to be eligible for the Education award, so it is important that you plan accordingly. Your contract with your agency includes 10 vacation days and serving through the end of your term, so please keep that commitment in mind as you plan for your next steps.

Can I volunteer outside of service?

You are welcome to, however we ask that your JV commitments remain your highest priority.

Can we get rid of this leftover stuff in our house?

Yes! JV houses tend to accumulate a lot of clutter throughout the years. JVC Northwest asks that you keep memorabilia like banners, mandalas, gifted books, and photo collages, but feel free to make the house your own and de-clutter as you and your community mates see fit.

Do we really need a house phone?

Some JVs decide not to or are unable to have a cell phone, and therefore it is important to have a house phone. Additionally, it is helpful to have a common phone line that members of the community can call to get ahold of JVs as the JVs change over from year to year.

If we need furniture, who pays for it?

You should first consult your lease or property manager to see if they provide anything as a part of the agreement. Next, if it is a minor furniture item or a desired item, seek out donations, resources or connections from support people or the FJV community, and thrift store purchases. If it is a more important or necessary furniture item, like a bed mattress, contact your Program Coordinator.

Can I list my Program Coordinator as a reference?

Program Coordinators are not able to offer references. Your supervisor would be the appropriate person to ask. JVC Northwest can provide employment verification. Requests for employment verification should be directed to the JV Program Manager.

Where do I find resources about the values, or community/spirituality night activities?

JVC Northwest offers many resources throughout the JV program year. Please review the JV Guidebook, Quarterly Resource Letters from the JV Program Manager, Orientation materials, Retreat materials, bookshelves in your JV house, and the JVC Northwest website. After reviewing all of those materials, contact your Program Coordinator- they are happy to help!