

# Parker Street food & furniture bank



## Volunteer Manual

- 2023 -

Proudly serving our community for 40 years

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>List of Services</b> .....	3
Food Box Program.....	3
Furniture Program.....	4
Household Goods Program.....	4
Back-to-School Program.....	5
Emergency Assistance Program.....	5
Holiday Hamper Program.....	5
<i>Great Things in Store</i> thrift stores.....	6
<b>Purpose and Scope of the Volunteer Agreement</b> .....	6
About the Code of Conduct.....	6
About the Policy Agreement.....	6
<b>Volunteer Information Center (how to set up your account online)</b> .....	7
VicTouch.....	7
VicNet.....	8
<b>Before Your Volunteer Shift</b> .....	9
<b>During Your Volunteer Shift</b> .....	9
<b>Volunteer Positions</b> .....	10
<b>Hours of Operation</b> .....	11

# Welcome to Parker Street!

Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank has operated independently in the Halifax region since 1983. Our mission is to provide food, furniture, clothing and emergency funding to low-income families and vulnerable individuals. By providing these services, we aim to create a safer, happier, healthier community for everyone.

Here at Parker Street, volunteers are at the centre of everything we do. Our team of volunteers graciously donate their time and energy to help us put our values into action, and are the reason we are able to further Parker Street's mission. In 2021, we were able to provide assistance to over 30,000 people in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM); and we continue to serve over 1,000 families per month.

In order to support our clientele to the best of our abilities, we must work as a team to exemplify Parker Street's values and uphold high ethical standards. It is vital to the organization that we offer kindness, respect and compassion to everyone.

In this booklet, you will find a detailed list of the services we provide; an overview of our Volunteer Agreement and an overview of our volunteer positions. You will also find instructions on how to set-up your volunteer account online in order to sign up for shifts, receive updates, and more.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am happy to help.

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Parker Street. We are excited to have you join our team.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Rogers (she/her)  
Volunteer and Events Coordinator  
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jacqueline.rogers@parkerstreet.org



“Small, independent charities such as Parker Street, exist to deal with the immediate needs that larger charities and government agencies can't address”



- Sydney Morgae, Chair of the Board

# List of Services

## Food Box Program

The Food Box Program provides food for clients, five days a week (four days for pick-up, one day for delivery). Food boxes are prepared by staff and volunteers in the mornings before we distribute them to clients. The boxes include canned goods, dry goods, fruits and vegetables, bread, dessert, and proteins.

Every household is entitled to one food box every three weeks. To receive a food box, clients must be registered in our system, PantrySoft. To register, clients are asked to provide the name, address, birthday, phone number and health card/identification for all household members.

Most clients pick up their food box at the Parker Street location. As of 2020, in order to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 infections, we have been asking clients to book a time to pick up their food so we can ensure proper safety measures, such as social distancing. That said, in most cases, we can still serve walk-up clients who have not booked a time, as long as they are already registered with us. Additionally, we will put overstocked food items outside for anyone to grab, without needing to register.

We offer delivery to clients who are unable to pick up their food box at our location. Generally, a doctor's note is required for delivery.

### Pick Up

**When:** Every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday between 8:30AM – 11:45AM and 1:00PM – 3:30PM

**Who is Eligible:** Anyone can register. If someone needs food, we will give it to them.

**Fee:** Free.

### Delivery

**When:** Every Tuesday. Typically between 9:30AM – 3:00PM

**Who is Eligible:** Anyone who is not capable of leaving their home or transporting their food box. A doctor's note is required.

**Fee:** \$5 or pay what you can. This money is strictly used to cover the cost of gas for deliveries.

## Furniture Program

Parker Street’s Furniture Program works with local housing workers and income assistance case managers to provide furniture for clients. Parker Street’s Furniture Department works with staff and volunteers to pick up donations, sort and repair damaged items, and deliver furniture items in the Halifax area. To make a furniture request, applicants must fill out a form and submit it to the department, and a scheduled delivery will be made upon approval. When applicable, we will send furniture donations to our stores where items are sold at an affordable price, and the profits go directly back to us to help pay for the costs of running our programs.

Please note: We do not accept donations from buildings with known cases of bed bugs. Parker Street is dedicated to ensuring that furniture donations are in good shape and bed-bug free. Parker Street has a team of staff employed to closely inspect furniture for bed bugs and other health hazards. In addition, we have a volunteer K9 who visits every month. This professionally trained dog can detect bed bugs by scent.

**When:** Monday – Friday, 8:30AM – 3:30PM

**Who is Eligible:** Individuals with a proven need for assistance.

**Fee:** \$40 delivery fee, due on date of delivery.

## Household Goods Program

Household donations such as kitchen utensils, pots and pans, towels, bedding, clothing, blankets, etc. are carefully sorted by staff and volunteers, and are distributed free of charge to clients as needed. Parker Street will prepare sets of household wares that then accompany requests from social assistance to set up new homes for clients. Parker Street has longstanding and strong relationships with shelters and social workers to supply these basic needs.

Donations with resale value that do not go to clients through the Household Goods Program are sent to our stores. Store sales help build the funds needed to finance our emergency programs.

**When:** Upon request.

**Who is Eligible:** Individuals with a genuine need.

**Fee:** Free.

## Back-to-School Program

Our Back-to-School Program runs annually during the months leading up to the first day of school in September. It aims to alleviate the financial stressors of the upcoming school year for low-income families and individuals. In recent years, and thanks to both our volunteers and our individual and corporate sponsors, we have been able to provide over 1,000 students with the school supplies needed to succeed. Clients must be pre-registered for this program because we need to know early on how many students need our help. This allows us to ask for meaningful and specific donations.

**Who is Eligible:** Students with little income support, predominantly catering to elementary and high school students, and occasionally to university students or individuals learning English as a second language. Clients must pre-register.

**Fee:** Free.

## Emergency Assistance Program

Our Emergency Assistance Program provides emergency funds for cost of heating/oil, power/electricity bills, or for prescription medication. Applicants must be registered on our PantrySoft system, and must submit an Emergency Assistance application to the Client Services department, and must provide supporting documents as stated on the application. Payments are typically made in the amount of half of an outstanding bill, up to \$200.

**Who is Eligible:** Individuals with no income, fixed income or low income. However, someone may be deemed eligible by the Client Services Director based on specific circumstances.

**Fee:** Free. However, this service is only offered when funding is available.

## Christmas Hamper Program

Our Christmas/Holiday Hamper Program is one of our longest running services. We work closely with the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, the Turkey Club, Q104, and many other sponsors to provide food and toys for members of our community who require supplementary assistance during the holiday season. Clients must pre-register for this program because we need to know early on how many families need our help. This allows us to ask for meaningful and specific donations.

**When:** Planning begins in the summer and fall. Hampers are distributed just before December 25th.

**Who is Eligible:** Individuals with no income, fixed income or low income. Clients must pre-register.

**Fee:** Free.

## Great Things in Store

Great Things in Store is the name of our two retail stores, located at 110 Woodlawn Rd. in Dartmouth, and 344 Herring Cove Rd. in Halifax. The revenue from these stores helps pay our staff wages, as well as the cost of heat and electricity at Parker Street's food and furniture bank.

We receive daily donations to stock the stores from many corporate sponsors. When these items are dropped off at our facility, they are sorted by our staff and volunteers. Items deemed appropriate for resale are then sent to our stores. Good Things in Store provides discounted prices on furniture, clothing, housewares and other goods to ensure community members have access to affordable household items. Items donated to us that are not food or essential household items (diapers, toilet paper, etc.), or are not needed by clients (e.g. to set up a new home) are sent to our stores for resale.

**When:** Open Sunday – Friday, 10:00AM – 4:00PM (Closed Saturdays)

**Who is Eligible:** Anyone.

**Fee:** Items are individually priced at a discount rate compared to other retailers.

# Volunteer Agreement

Our **Volunteer Agreement** offers a complete catalogue of the terms and conditions, policies, and personal code of conduct that volunteers are required to follow while at Parker Street. The Volunteer Agreement is divided into three sections, each of which requires a separate signature. Please read each section carefully.

Our **Code of Conduct** is in place to ensure that we can provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive workplace for everyone. Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect. If an issue persists, please talk to management or fill out an incident report form. Your security and privacy will always be our priority.

Our **Policy Agreement** strives to provide an in-depth understanding of the use and purpose of Parker Street’s policies. At Parker Street, we believe transparency is essential to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers and staff. We encourage all volunteers to familiarize themselves with our policies and practices.

Our **Confidentiality Agreement** is in place to ensure that the privacy and security of all clients, staff, and volunteers are protected.

# Volunteer Information Center

For all volunteer information and scheduling, Parker Street uses the database Volgistics. This is your online Volunteer Information Center (VIC).

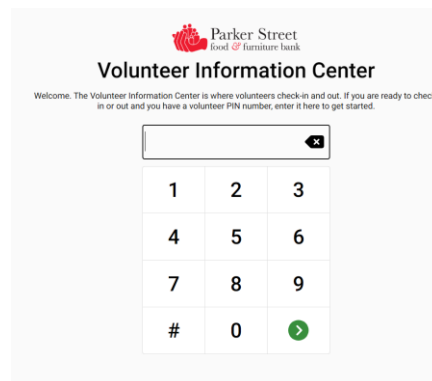
## VicTouch

During your volunteer orientation, you will receive a volunteer PIN that is associated with your VIC account to sign in and out with when you are here at Parker Street to track your volunteer service. Parker Street relies on the Volgistics database to track our community involvement and volunteer hours. This helps us receive grants and other donations and, in turn, allows us to improve our facility and serve our community better.

Additionally, it is important to sign in for safety reasons, so we know who is on site at all times; and, of course, we use the recorded hours for our Volunteer Recognition Program, to show our appreciation to our hard-working volunteers!

The VicTouch PIN pad (fig. 1 below) is saved as the Microsoft Edge homepage on the Volunteer Room computer. If it is not open, simply click the Microsoft Edge shortcut on the desktop, labeled “VicTouch.” Then, enter your volunteer PIN. Please remember to sign-out before you leave, otherwise the computer will automatically sign you out after four hours.

**Figure. 1**



(VicTouch Pin Pad Screen)



## VicNet

To view your volunteer service, sign up for volunteer shifts in advance and check volunteer news and updates, you can log into your account on VicNet. You can access VicNet from any device, at any time. Your username is your email address you used in your volunteer application. Before signing in for the first time, you will need to create a password. To do this, follow the steps below:

1. Go to [www.parkerstreet.org](http://www.parkerstreet.org) and [click](#) on the “Volunteer” tab at the top of the page. Scroll down to “Already a member?” (Fig. 2) and click the “Login” button. This will take you to the Volunteer Information Center page (Fig. 3).
2. Click on the “Need a Password” link (as shown in Fig. 3).

Fig. 2

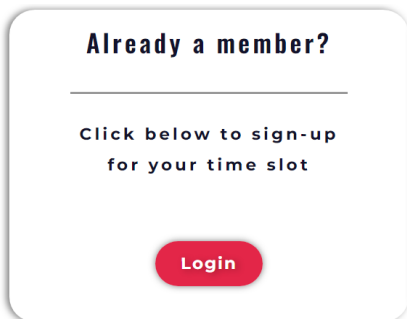


Fig. 3



3. This will bring you to a new page (fig. 4). Enter the same email address used on your volunteer application (**your login name is your email address**) and you will be sent a link to reset your password.

Fig. 4



Fig. 5



4. Once you have set a password, you can log in on from any device to sign up for shifts, track your hours, and much more! (See Fig. 4). If you need any additional help navigating your volunteer profile, please ask a team member for a brief tutorial, or see the instruction booklet in the volunteer room.

# Before Your Shift

We encourage all volunteers to sign up for their shift ahead of time on VicNet. This is useful for Parker Street staff because it allows us to recognize when a role or a shift needs to be quickly filled. It is also useful to know how many volunteers are scheduled on a given day to plan ahead for different tasks or projects needing attention.

That being said, we will not turn away a volunteer who drops in for a shift without signing up on VicNet; as long as you sign in and out on the VicTouch PIN-pad upon arrival. It is very important that you sign in.

We ask that all volunteers come prepared for their shift. Please wear comfortable, close-toed shoes, and if you are working in the food bank, please wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty, or feel free to bring a change of clothing.

You will be able to store your belongings in our Volunteer Room lockers. You are welcome to bring a lock from home if you wish. Please note that Parker Street is not responsible for lost or stolen items. When you are ready for duty, please sign in on VicTouch, using the computer in the volunteer room.

# During Your Shift

Once you have signed in and are ready to start your volunteer shift, please wash your hands and do so frequently throughout your shift. If you are handling food directly, please wear gloves. Practice safe lifting procedures. And please do not attempt to lift anything that is too heavy. Do not hesitate to ask someone for assistance.

Keep in mind that our donations each day can be unpredictable. While we want volunteers to focus on a certain task, there will be occasions when immediate help is needed elsewhere. In other words, volunteers may be asked to assist in several different roles during a shift.

On slower days, there are always "side duties" that can be completed. These include, but are not limited to, portioning off large quantities of dry goods, breaking down cardboard boxes, washing dishes, cleaning crates, sweeping, etc.

If at any point you are unsure of what to do, please consult a staff member. They will be happy to help you, direct you and answer any questions.

# Volunteer Positions

## **Dry Goods Sorter**

**When:** Sunday – Friday, typically 8:00AM – 3:30PM

**Requirements:** Mobility, heavy lifting, general food knowledge

## **Fresh Food Sorter**

**When:** Monday – Friday, typically 11:00AM – 3:00PM

**Requirements:** Mobility, heavy lifting, general food knowledge

## **Food Box Assembler**

**When:** Monday – Friday, 7:00AM – 11:00AM

**Requirements:** Mobility, general food knowledge

## **Food Box Delivery Driver**

**When:** Tuesdays, 9:00AM – 11:30AM

**Requirements:** Valid driver's license, clean driving record for 5 years, Mobility, some heavy lifting

## **Registration Clerk**

**When:** Monday – Friday, 9:00AM – 3:00PM

**Requirements:** Fluent in Arabic is a huge asset, basic computer skills, communication

## **Events and Fundraisers**

**When:** Event dates and preparation/seasonal

**Requirements:** Friendly, communication skills, organization, community oriented

## **General Cleaner**

**When:** Sunday – Friday, 8:00AM – 4:00PM

**Requirements:** Mobility, attention to detail

## **Clothing and Housewares Sorter**

**When:** Monday – Friday, 8:00AM – 3:30PM

**Requirements:** Mobility, organization

## **Furniture Warehouse Assistant**

**When:** Monday – Friday, 8:00AM – 3:30PM

**Requirements:** Mobility, heavy lifting

**PLEASE NOTE:** Volunteer shifts are generally between 1-4 hours. The days and hours on the volunteer cards indicate the hours which this position is offered; not a set schedule.

Using the Volgistics system, you will be able to sign up for volunteer shifts online, at a time and date that works for your schedule. Please be aware, we ask as a general rule that volunteers commit a minimum of eight (8) hours a month.

# Hours of Operation

	<b>Office hours</b>	<b>Staff/volunteer working hours</b>	<b>Service hours for clients*</b>	<b>Thrift Store hours</b>
<b><i>Monday</i></b>	8am – 4pm	7am – 4pm	8:30am – 2pm (closed from 12– 1pm for lunch)	9am – 5pm
<b><i>Tuesday</i></b>	8am – 4pm	7am – 4pm	Food box delivery ONLY (9am – 2pm)	9am – 5pm
<b><i>Wednesday</i></b>	8am – 4pm	7am – 4pm	8:30am – 2pm (closed from 12 – 1pm for lunch)	9am – 5pm
<b><i>Thursday</i></b>	8:30am – 4pm	7am – 4pm	9:30am – 2pm (closed from 12– 1pm for lunch)	9am – 5pm
<b><i>Friday</i></b>	8am – 4pm	7am – 4pm	8:30am – 2pm (closed from 12– 1pm for lunch)	9am – 5pm
<b><i>Saturday</i></b>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<b><i>Sunday</i></b>	<i>Closed</i>	8am – 4pm	<i>Closed</i>	10am – 5pm

\*All client services are by appointment only.

**Parker Street offices, services and stores close for all provincial and federal holidays. Additionally, in some cases, we will close due to inclement weather. Volunteering will not be available on days when Parker Street is closed.**

Please contact us if you have questions regarding hours of operation and/or availability.