

## CVRAN Confidentiality Policy

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Confidentiality
<b>Policy Number:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Review:</b>	Annually
<b>Individual Responsible for Policy Development/Review:</b>	Executive Director

**Coordination:** \_\_\_\_\_  
President

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

**Purpose:** Confidentiality is vital to our work. We must strive to protect the safety, privacy, and dignity of our New Vermonter neighbors.

### 1. General guidelines

Any information you may have about an asylum seeker or a refugee should not be shared with anyone unless there is a clear and specific reason relating to the individual's health and welfare. If you are in doubt about any issues, questions, or information about an individual you're working with, ask the team leader, Direct Services Coordinator, or Executive Director for clarification.

### 2. New Vermonters' backgrounds

A refugee or asylum seeker's background and reason for fleeing his/her country to seek refuge in the U.S. is confidential information and should not be shared. The volunteer never asks about these reasons, and listens without comment if these circumstances are brought up by New Vermonters. It is also important for their legal cases that they not tell their stories many times, because when stories are retold they often alter gradually, yet to be granted asylum they must recite their story exactly as they told it when they entered the country.

### 3. Confidentiality in public

Protecting the confidentiality of New Vermonters is a responsibility we carry with us everywhere we go, especially in public spaces like restaurants or on the internet. We can prevent misunderstanding, rumor, or even threat to our neighbors by being careful not to use identifying information like full names, addresses, locations of work or school, immigration status, etc. Also, our legal counsel has recommended that CVRAN volunteers not put anything in an email, text, or WhatsApp that they wouldn't want the government to read.

### 4. Sharing of information

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Do not share information about a New Vermonter through any type of social media because it could endanger them or their families in their home country. Be circumspect about what you share with friends and others. Avoid sharing the newcomer's country of origin unless the person is already publicly sharing that information. If pressed, you can speak broadly, giving the name of the continent the person is from.

### **5. Levels of privacy**

As a volunteer on a team, you will be given only the details you need to fulfill your assignments by the team leader. Within teams, there can be information about an individual that is not necessary to share with every volunteer, depending on the services they provide and relationship to the individual. While it can be tempting to want to know all the ins and outs of a family's life, there is information that's crucial to share for the welfare of the New Vermonter and other info that is not, i.e. health information gleaned from attending a medical appointment does not need to be shared with a volunteer who provides rides to the grocery store, etc. We want to empower team leaders and volunteers who hold sensitive information about New Vermonters to uphold boundaries of privacy for both the safety and comfort of those we serve.

### **6. Written communications**

CVRRAN staff, board members, and volunteers will follow guidelines to protect privacy and safety in written communications about New Vermonters. Limit personally identifying information whenever possible, including full names, addresses, status info, etc. This applies to emails, texts, WhatsApp messages, documents, and all written forms of communication, all of which are able to be subpoenaed by the U.S. government during the immigration process.

When writing anything about an individual, whenever possible, use the first and last initial of the name of the head of household (e.g. an email with the subject line "HB housing update"). Be cognizant of granting permission to view documents only to those who need access, and delete local copies (email attachments, downloads folder, etc.) of documents with identifying information that you no longer need.

### **7. Policy acknowledgment and training**

All volunteers in contact with New Vermonters will receive and acknowledge understanding of this policy, and participate in training and education available on the details of this policy use.

### **8. Signature**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_