

Volunteer Policy

Purpose of Volunteer Policy

This policy formally acknowledges and supports the role of volunteers at Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County (HFHHC), ensures best practices, and outlines the rights and responsibilities of volunteers.

Definition of a HFHHC Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who provides time and talent to HFHHC through work on construction, office, committee, ReStores, or any other Habitat project without compensation or expectation of compensation. Volunteers are not employees of the organization.

Our Philosophy

HFHHC's leadership mandates a sincere, on-going commitment to partner with our homeowner candidates and our volunteers. If Habitat meets their needs, the tangible results of its mission will be fulfilled, homeownership opportunities will be created, communities will be positively changed, and volunteers will feel accomplishment and appreciation.

Habitat Hillsborough believes that:

- All who share a commitment to our mission are welcome to join us in our work regardless of their background, ethnic origin, race, age or gender. Everyone is welcome at our table.
- HFHHC should be made up of a diverse group of individuals who put aside personal agendas, egos, and differences to support Habitat's mission and homeowner candidates.
- Every member of the HFHHC family is valuable and everyone's time, talents, and efforts are special gifts that are to be appreciated, respected, recognized, and never taken for granted.
- The right role can be found for any person with a desire and heart to serve. Volunteers and staff should be given opportunities to learn and grow within the organization.
- The work of every volunteer is valued equally. All volunteers and staff are treated with dignity and respect.
- HFHHC values volunteers by giving them meaningful work to do and the materials, tools, training, and supervision to complete their tasks safely and efficiently.
- Volunteers are responsible for the quality of their work, their conduct at HFHHC work sites, and for meeting their commitment to HFHHC, its homeowner candidates, and its mission.
- All volunteers deserve frequent and accurate information about HFHHC activities and operations provided through regular, open, on-on-one communication with staff, through publications, and through conversation with volunteer leaders.
- Volunteers provide our organization with credibility, insight, perspective, and diversity. In addition, volunteers provide expertise that enlightens our operations, helps fulfill our mission, and promotes community engagement.

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To implement this philosophy, HFHHC leaders and staff will:

- Actively seek and encourage participation of volunteers in all areas of the organization including planning, problem-solving, construction, the Habitat ReStores, and administration.
- Share strategic goals and on-going schedules to inform volunteers and staff, and provide guidance about where to focus their energies.
- Respond to all inquiries from perspective volunteers in a timely manner to facilitate their orientation and scheduling.
- Match volunteers with tasks that meet their interests and skills, with clear instructions, deadlines, materials, tools, and freedom to complete tasks.
- Foster personal growth among volunteers by providing skilled supervision, training, and opportunities to learn new skills.
- Train all volunteers and homeowner candidates who are willing to learn.
- Give volunteers meaningful work and abundant thanks, directly and frequently.
- Consider all volunteer requests, suggestions, and grievances in a respectful and timely manner.
- Work together to continually renew and reinforce our mutual commitment to the mission of Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County.

Volunteer Rights

All Habitat volunteers have the right to:

1. Equal opportunity regardless of sex, ethnicity, marital status, religion, community background, or political persuasion.
2. Be assigned appropriate tasks according to ability, skill, interests, availability, and training.
3. Receive health and safety information to maximize their safety and welfare.
4. Receive training and supervision for the tasks accepted.
5. Be treated as a fellow team member who contributes to HFHHC goals through their volunteer work.
6. A safe and inviting environment to work that is free of harassment and discrimination.
7. Make suggestions about their assignment and the HFHHC volunteer program, and be acknowledged by staff.
8. Expect that HFHHC be a good steward of your time.
9. Be given appropriate expression of appreciation and recognition.
10. Expect that records will be kept; documenting positions held, time spent volunteering, commendations, etc.
11. Be treated with a spirit of friendliness and cooperation so that HFHHC will continue to be known as a “great place to volunteer.”

Volunteer Responsibility

HFHHC expects volunteers to:

1. Agree to HFHHC's policy on volunteering.
2. Cooperate with staff and fellow volunteers, and maintain a team attitude.
3. Sign in and out each time you have a volunteer assignment.
4. Honor your commitments and come when scheduled.
5. Treat all volunteers, staff, homeowner candidates, and anyone you meet when representing HFHHC with courtesy and respect.
6. Be on time for scheduled meetings and work assignments.
7. Help create the pleasant and safe volunteering conditions that HFHHC intends for you.
8. Those who track their hours for court-related purposes must follow proper protocol as stated on the HFHHC website.

HFHHC needs the help of volunteers to make each volunteering day enjoyable and rewarding.

Volunteer Background Check

Background checks will be conducted for "key volunteers" as indicated in the Affiliate's background check policy. Key volunteers are defined as: (1) any volunteer, who, through HFHHC programming, has consistent and direct contact with vulnerable populations; or (2) repeat volunteers who consistently volunteer more than one time per month.

Volunteer Agreement, Release and Waiver of Liability

All HFHHC volunteers are required to sign an Affiliate Waiver of Liability before volunteering. Each volunteer must provide emergency contact information. If a volunteer is less than 18 years old (a minor), the volunteer's parent or legal guardian must sign the volunteer waiver underneath the volunteer signature. Volunteers must complete a new waiver each year. The Minor Waiver Form is available online and on site.

Age of Volunteers

HFHHC staff leadership evaluates the abilities and competency of all volunteers and assigns appropriate, safe activities as availability and conditions permit. There is no maximum age for Habitat volunteers.



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Construction

Volunteers 18 years and older may register themselves and sign up for a volunteer shift online. 16 and 17-year-olds must register online as well as provide a minor's waiver of liability signed by a parent or guardian. They may work on a construction site but may not use power tools or ladders. For safety reasons, youth under the age of 16 are not allowed to volunteer on an active construction site. Youth under 16 years old may be allowed, under special circumstance, if approved by the Volunteer Coordinator and a member of the Leadership to participate in sod, landscaping, or other related activities.

Home Preservation

Volunteers 18 years and older may register themselves and sign up for a volunteer shift online. Volunteers 14 through 17 years of age are welcome to volunteer on a Home Preservation project with an adult volunteer supervisor (10:1 ratio) or parent/guardian. All volunteers under the age of 18 must complete a minor's waiver of liability signed by their parent/guardian in addition to their online registration. They may not use power tools or ladders. Youth under the age of 14 are not allowed to volunteer on a home preservation project.

Habitat ReStore

Volunteers 18 years and older may register themselves and sign up for a volunteer shift online. Volunteers 15 through 17 years of age are welcome to volunteer at the ReStore with an adult volunteer supervisor (10:1 ratio) or parent/guardian. Volunteers 14 years of age are welcome to volunteer at the Habitat ReStore with a parent/guardian with this special circumstance allowed by the Volunteer Coordinator and a Leadership Team Member. Volunteer activities can include price marking, cleaning, shelving, or bagging goods. All volunteers under the age of 18 must complete a minor's paper waiver of liability signed by their parent/guardian. They may not use power tools or ladders.

Other Volunteer Activities

Volunteers younger than 14 years of age can volunteer in organizational activities other than the activities listed above on the condition that the volunteer activities must be age-appropriate, have proper adult supervision in designated safe areas away from potential hazards, and the activity is approved by the Volunteer Director and a member of the Executive Leadership Team. Age-appropriate activities are outlined in the Practical Guidance for Engaging Youth Volunteers developed by HFHI.

Youth Groups

For groups with youth under the age of 18, we require at 10:1 ratio of youth to adults along with a signed minor's waiver by a parent/guardian, online registration supervised by an adult, and chaperones of 18 years of age or older.



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Safety

HFHHC and our volunteers share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. HFHHC will attempt to ensure a safe work environment and to comply with federal, state, and local safety regulations. In turn, volunteers are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all of their work activities. They are asked to report any unsafe conditions to the appropriate HFHHC staff member immediately. Any accident, which results in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to HFHHC leadership.

A first aid kit and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is located on all properties and at the construction sites.

Incident Reporting

Any incidents that occur while volunteering with HFHHC at any location must be reported to the Volunteer Services Director and Department head immediately after the injured party is safe and emergency personnel are contacted (if needed). All sites are equipped with the Volunteer Incident Reporting form. An incident report needs to be completed and emailed to the Department head, Volunteer Services Coordinator, and VP of Human Resources within 2 business days of the incident.

Community Service

HFHHC welcomes community service volunteers from civic groups, schools, community assistance programs, and the judicial system. Community service volunteers are responsible for maintaining an accurate timesheet and to ensure it is signed at the end of each volunteer day by a HFHHC supervisor. Hours worked, but not recorded or approved at the end of each day of service, will not be counted. Community Service volunteers must sign in and out on HFHHC's volunteer time sheets. This is the only information that will be entered in our database.

Court Mandated Community Service

For appropriate placement within our organization, HFHHC reserves the right to know the offense related to court-ordered community service and may accept or deny participation related to charges as outlined in our policy. Court-ordered community service volunteers will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers. Certain charges such as theft, violent charges, weapons charges, distribution or intent to sell of drug/ drug paraphernalia, and sexual or violent crimes involving a minor are not accepted by the HFHHC Court Mandated Community Service Program. Charges relating to possession of drug/ drug paraphernalia will be up to the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator and a Leadership Team Member.

Volunteer Assistant Site Supervisors The role and responsibility of the HFHHC Volunteer Assistant Site Supervisor is to assist the Site Supervisor to keep volunteers safe and productive.



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Absence and Lateness

The positions that volunteers fill is critical to HFHHC. If a volunteer is unable to attend a scheduled workday, or if they arrive late, they must contact the Volunteer Services Coordinator with as much notice as possible.

Sign-in Sheets

Volunteer sign-in sheets are very important to our organization. All volunteers must sign in and out on the forms or electronic means provided each volunteer day on site. These are then updated to the volunteer database.

Use of HFHHC Vehicle

Volunteers may not drive HFHHC vehicles. HFHHC staff is not allowed to provide transportation for volunteers except in extreme emergencies.

Harassment and Discrimination

HFHHC is firmly committed to providing a positive work environment free of discrimination and bias. Each volunteer is personally responsible for maintain such a work environment. HFHHC prohibits any actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's race, sex, sexual preference, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition, or other legally protected characteristic. Any conduct or action, whether overt or subtle, which create an offensive or hostile work environment is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action.

HFHHC prohibits any harassment between volunteers, employees, or other non-employee on the basis of sex. No volunteer, regardless of gender identity or expression, should be subject to unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtones and conduct, either verbal or physical. Misconduct applies regardless of gender or expression and includes harassment between individuals of both sexes and the same sex.

Any volunteer who believes he or she is a victim of sexual or discriminatory harassment is encouraged to let the harasser know that his or her behavior is unwelcome. In addition, volunteers who believe that have been harassed should refer to the Whistleblower Policy for instructions to file a grievance.

Volunteer Conduct

HFHHC is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider cause leading to the termination.

Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior and conduct that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of infractions or conduct that may result in limitation or termination of the volunteer relationship.

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- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of HFHHC property.
- Misuse of agency funds, equipment, or materials.
- Falsification of timekeeping records.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcoholic or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty, or while operating HFHHC equipment.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the work place.
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to the damage or property.
- Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's request or to carry or a reasonable job assignment.
- Gross misconduct or insubordination.
- Violation of safety or health rules.
- Abuse or mistreatment of homeowners, volunteers, or employees.
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination.
- Violation of HFHHC anti-discrimination policies and procedures.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Excessive absenteeism without notice.
- Releasing confidential information.
- Racial, ethnic, sexual or demeaning slurs of any nature.

Volunteer Policy Implementation

This volunteer policy will be shared with all staff and be available for volunteers. It will also be made available electronically via the HFHHC website. The policy will be periodically reviewed as the need arises.