



## Volunteer Handbook

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www.habitat-tcp.org

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities. Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities builds partnerships among volunteers, families and the community to transform lives and revitalize neighborhoods by enabling families in need to earn and own a simple, decent, affordable home.

It is our hope that you will join us in this spirit of partnership and that your work here at Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities is successful and fulfilling. We hope your volunteer experience will be rewarding, enjoyable and worthwhile. Since Habitat for Humanity is a volunteer organization, we rely on volunteers like you to help families in need realize the dream of owning a decent, affordable home. From our construction and Habitat Restore operations, to the office, special events, and committee work, we rely on volunteers in every facet of our organization.

This handbook will provide you with general policies and practices of Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook for it will answer many common questions concerning your volunteering. In order to retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities reserves the right to change, add to, or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits described in this handbook.

Thanks again for your interest in partnering with us!

## **Habitat 101**

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty and homelessness. Habitat works in partnership with low-income working families, sponsors, and communities to build and renovate decent, affordable housing. Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit, financed with affordable, no-interest loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat homes.

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and the mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor – "sweat equity" – into building Habitat houses and working in various support areas. Habitat's work is accomplished at the community level by Habitat affiliates-independent, locally run, non-profit organizations. Each affiliate coordinates all aspects of Habitat home building in its local area; fundraising, building site selection, partner family selection and support, house construction and mortgage servicing. HFHI headquarters, located in Americus, GA, provides

information, training and a variety of other support services to Habitat affiliates worldwide.

Habitat for Humanity invites people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need. Habitat is a worldwide, grass-roots movement. There are more than 2,100 active affiliates in almost 100 countries, including all 50 states of the U.S., the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Habitat has built more than 225,000 houses around the world, providing more than 1,000,000 people with safe, decent, affordable shelter. HFHI was founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller. Former President Jimmy Carter partnered with Habitat in 1984 and has become Habitat's most famous spokesperson.

Throughout the world, the cost of Habitat houses varies from as little as \$800 in some developing countries to an average of \$60,000 in the U.S. Families in need of decent shelter apply to local Habitat affiliates. The affiliate's Family Selection Committee chooses homeowner's based on their level of need, their willingness to become partners in the program, and their ability to repay the no-interest loan. Every affiliate follows a nondiscriminatory policy of family selection. Neither race nor religion is a factor in choosing the families who receive Habitat homes.

### **Habitat for Humanity- Tri-Cities Volunteer Opportunities**

Since our inception in 1994, we have built more than 43 homes. Our goal is to build 12 homes a year, and sustain that level of construction indefinitely. To reach this goal we need volunteers to help in all aspects of our program. These opportunities include but are not limited to:

**Construction:** Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities needs construction volunteers on-site Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 8am-4pm year-round. Both skilled and unskilled volunteers are welcome! We ask that you commit to at least a 4-hour shift (8am-12pm or 12pm-4pm). In return we promise that you'll have a lot of fun, meet some great people, learn about construction and feel good about the time spent helping others.

- **Skilled construction volunteers** provide leadership, professional expertise and craftsmanship. We especially need people who are willing to lead teams of unskilled volunteers during the work day.
- **Unskilled construction volunteers** are needed that are flexible, hardworking, self-motivated and willing to help in all phases of construction and tasks with which they are comfortable.

**Committees:** Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities carries out its work through operating committees appointed to perform various tasks of the organization. Our current active committees include:

- **Family Selection:** Distribute applications, carefully review applications, interview families to determine if there is a need due to current living conditions, and assess if they're a willing partner for this program.
- **Family Partnering:** Assist families as they go through the building process and as they become home owners. Introduce the neighbors to the family, assist families in learning how to be a good homeowner, and assist with any potential problems in a mentorship role.
- **Site Selection:** Seek and evaluate opportunities to obtain land through purchase or donation, and make recommendations to the Board regarding land acquisitions.
- **Church Relations Committee:** Help develop relationships between Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities and churches, communicate needs, garner support, and act as a church representative.
- **Building Committee:** Coordinate building projects, make plans, estimate materials and costs, procurement of materials, and the scheduling of crew chiefs.
- **The Habitat ReStore Oversight Committee:** Help develop program guidelines and policies as The Habitat ReStore continues to grow into a thriving retail business. Help coordinate and recruit volunteers and seek out possible new locations for future expansion.

**Events:** Short-term volunteer projects to help with special fundraising events throughout the year.

**Office Support:** Office volunteers answer phones, translate for our Spanish-speaking families and assist staff with special projects. We're looking for friendly folks who enjoy working with people – no office experience required!

**The Habitat Restore:** Help with warehouse sales by greeting and assisting customers, pricing items, stocking new items. **Donation Pick-Up:** Picking up donations from stores or customers and bringing them and unloading them at the warehouse. This is a great opportunity to meet donors and increase familiarity of building materials.

## **Work Environment**

You and Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities share the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities will attempt to assure a safe work environment and to comply with federal, State and local safety regulations. In turn, you are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all of your work activities. You are also asked to report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately. Any accident, which results in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to your supervisor.

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

- Theft or inappropriate removal of Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities property.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Use of tobacco products by minors.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcoholic or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty or while operating Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities vehicles or equipment.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
- Disruptive behavior or activity in the workplace.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities or another person's property.
- Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable request.
- Violation of safety or health rules.
- False accusation of harassment, unlawful discrimination or disparaging treatment by one volunteer to another.
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives or firearms in the workplace.
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

**Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination:** Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities is firmly committed to providing a positive work environment free of discrimination and bias. Each volunteer is personally responsible for maintaining such a work environment. Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities prohibits any actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition or other legally protected characteristic. Any conduct or action, whether overt or subtle, which creates an offensive or hostile work environment is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate removal from the worksite. Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities prohibits

harassment between volunteers, employees or other non-employee on the basis of sex.

**Co-Worker Relations:** Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities recognizes that conflicts, misunderstandings and problems will arise from time to time. These concerns or problems may involve co-workers, supervisors or Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities policies. Although most misunderstandings can and should be solved on an informal basis, more formal provisions have been made to resolve difficult problems. The procedure for raising a problem or concern is as follows:

1. The volunteer should inform directly the person who is the source or cause of the problem or concern that there is a problem or concern. The people should attempt to resolve the issue informally and on their own.
2. If the volunteer does not wish to communicate directly with the person who is the source or cause of the issue or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue after discussing it with the other party, the volunteer should then contact their supervisor, followed by the volunteer manager or Executive Director.

### **Things Every Volunteer Should Know**

**Dress Code:** Everyone is expected to dress appropriately for the job in which they are performing whether they are employees or volunteers. If anyone has questions on what is appropriate, they are to ask the supervisor under which they are performing the job. (Construction and the Habitat Restore dress code require that you wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty and closed-toe shoes. Dress appropriately for the weather).

**Sign-In:** Volunteers are expected to sign in and out every time they volunteer. Sign-in sheets are available at the worksite, in the office and in the Habitat ReStore warehouse.

**Waivers of Liability:** A waiver of liability must be signed by every volunteer. Minors must have a parent/guardian sign for them. Waivers are kept at the worksite as well as at the office.

# YOUTH GROUP POLICY

In order to accommodate our construction schedule and also ensure that your group has the best experience possible the following guidelines have been set:

## **Youth Group Prerequisites:**

- One group leader\*\* for the group as a whole.
- One adult per 5 kids.
- Insurance waiver MUST be signed by parent or guardian and brought to worksite.
- Youth must be at least 16 to work on the construction site.
- Youth under 18 CANNOT:
  - o Operate power equipment
  - o Work on a roof
  - o Drive a vehicle of any kind

**\*\*A leader is an individual 21 years of age or older who can actively supervise the group.**

# Adult Group Policy

In order to accommodate our construction schedule and also ensure that your group has the best experience possible the following guidelines have been set:

## **Group Prerequisites:**

- Individuals must be 18 years of age or older.
- One group leader for the group as a whole.
- Group dates must be scheduled as far ahead as possible.

**\*\*A leader is an individual 21 years of age or older who can actively supervise the group.**

## **Construction Volunteer Information**

### **What happens at a construction site?**

As you arrive on site, the Crew Chief or Volunteer Coordinator will greet you and direct you to sign in. Volunteers are then shown the task(s) that need to be accomplished that day. Once you complete a task it is up to you to receive another task from your Crew Chief. Please tell the Crew Chief if certain tasks make you uncomfortable, such as using power tools or working on a ladder, etc.

### **Do I need experience?**

Volunteers of all skill levels are needed to help build homes. All we need are volunteers that are willing to learn and enjoy working hard.

### **What should I wear?**

Wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty and closed-toe shoes. Dress appropriately for the weather.

### **How many hours do I need to volunteer?**

Volunteers are encouraged to sign up for a shift of **8am-12pm**, **12pm-4pm**, or the entire day.

### **What should I bring?**

- Water bottle
- Work gloves: OPTIONAL (gloves are provided if you don't have your own).
- Basic tools: OPTIONAL (hammer, tape measure, etc.) (ALL tools are provided but you are welcome to bring your own).
- Lunch/Snacks (check to see if lunch is being provided the day you come out).

### **How old do I need to be?**

Volunteers need to be 16 and older to be on the construction site. Volunteers under 18 need to have a waiver of liability signed by a parent or guardian.

## **How do I sign up to volunteer?**

Habitat for Humanity Tri-Cities uses an on-line scheduling system. Follow the instructions below to register. If you have questions or need assistance call the office at 509.783.2221.

### **VOLUNTEER UP! INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Go to [www.habitat-tcp.org](http://www.habitat-tcp.org) & click on "Volunteer" at the top of the page.
2. Click on the "VolunteerUP" button.
3. At the top left of the VolunteerUP page, click on "Log In."
4. Under "I am a new volunteer," click on "Register"
5. Create a user name & password.
6. Be sure and enter an email address. This is how we keep in contact, and how you can receive reminders of when you're scheduled to volunteer.
7. Continue to fill out the registration with information about yourself and your skill levels.
8. Click "Register" at the bottom of the page.
9. Click on "Return to Calendar."
10. To sign up for a project on a certain day, click on "Sign Up."
11. Follow the instructions on the page. You can even sign up for a reminder email!
12. You are now registered as a volunteer & can sign up at any time for any project.

**\*Having trouble? Call the office and we'll help you!  
(509) 783-2221**

Monthly volunteer orientations are offered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month at 6pm.