



# Volunteer Handbook and Policy Manual

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## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

### **Volunteers – the Heart of Our Mission**

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity's mission mandates a sincere, on-going commitment to partner with our home buyer families and our volunteers. If Habitat meets their needs, its mission will be fulfilled, homeownership opportunities will be created, lives will be positively changed, volunteers will feel accomplishment and appreciation, and the community will be engaged.

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization founded on Christian principles that seeks to put God's love into action by building homes, communities and hope. Habitat seeks to improve the quality of life of its partners, volunteers, and the entire community and to inspire everyone to live with a spirit of compassion. Habitat for Humanity is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their housing conditions. Habitat for Humanity was founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, affordable, durable place to live in dignity and safety, and that decent shelter in decent communities should be a matter of conscience and action for all.

### **All are welcome**

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity has an open-door policy: All who believe that everyone needs a decent, affordable place to live are welcome to help with the work, regardless of race, religion, age, gender, political views or any of the other distinctions that too often divide people. In short, Habitat welcomes partner families, volunteers, supporters, and staff from all backgrounds and also serves people in need of decent housing regardless of race, color, national origin, ethnic or religious background, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or familial status, height, weight, disability, veteran status, or any other class protected by law, in accordance with all federal and state laws.

As a matter of policy, Habitat for Humanity International and its affiliated organizations do not proselytize. This means that Habitat will not offer assistance on the expressed or implied condition that people must either adhere to or convert to a particular faith, or listen and respond to messaging designed to induce conversion to a particular faith.

We believe that:

- Every member of the Habitat 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 are treated with dignity and respect.
- Habitat values volunteers by giving them meaningful work to do and the materials, tools, training, and supervision to complete their tasks safely and in a timely manner.
- Volunteers are responsible for the quality of their work, their conduct at Habitat work sites, and for meeting their commitment to Habitat, its homeowners, and its mission.

- All volunteers deserve frequent and accurate information about Habitat activities and operations provided through regular, open, one-on-one communication with staff, through publications, and through conversations with volunteer leaders.
- Volunteers provide our organization with credibility, insight, perspective, diversity, and expertise that enlightens our operations, helps fulfill our mission, and engages the community in our activities.

To implement this philosophy, Habitat leaders and staff will:

- Actively seek and encourage participation of volunteers in all areas of the organization including planning, problem-solving, construction, the Habitat ReStore, and administration.
- Share strategic and business plans and on-going schedules to inform volunteers and staff, and focus their energies.
- Respond to all inquiries from prospective 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 the tasks.
- Foster personal growth among volunteers by providing skilled supervision, training, and opportunities to learn new skills.
- Train all volunteers and home buyers 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 Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity.



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity. We are happy that you have joined our team to provide low-income families new hope in the form of decent, affordable housing.

Our words and actions are for the ultimate purpose of putting shelter on the hearts and minds of people in such a way that poverty housing becomes socially, politically, and spiritually unacceptable in our world. With these goals in mind, Habitat employees, homeowners, and volunteers work together in harmony, in an atmosphere of trust and respect for each other.

It is our hope that you will join us in this spirit of partnership and that your work here at Habitat is successful and fulfilling. We hope your volunteer experience will be rewarding, enjoyable, and worthwhile. Habitat relies 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 our office, special events, and committee work, volunteers are a part of every facet of our organization.

This handbook will provide you with general policies and practices of Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity. Please familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook, as it will answer many common questions concerning your volunteering. To retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, Habitat reserves the right to change, add to, or eliminate any of the policies described in this handbook.

## Habitat 101



Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating substandard housing. Habitat works in partnership with low-income working families, supporters, and communities to build, renovate, and repair decent, affordable housing. Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat repairs and sells homes to partner families at no profit, and financed with affordable loans. Homeowners' monthly mortgage and loan payments are recycled back into the program to build and repair more Habitat homes.

**Habitat is not a giveaway program.** In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor - sweat equity - into building Habitat houses and working in various support areas. They purchase their homes from Habitat with a 20 – 30-year mortgage. Home repair partners repay Habitat through an affordable loan.

Habitat for Humanity's work is accomplished at the community level by Habitat affiliates - independent, locally-run, 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations like Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity. Each affiliate coordinates all aspects of Habitat home building in its local area: fund raising, building site selection, partner family selection and support, house construction, and mortgage servicing. HFHI, 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 and repair houses together in partnership with families in need. Habitat is a worldwide, grassroots movement. There are

more than 1,300 active affiliates in 89 countries, including all 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

. Millard and Linda Fuller founded HFHI in 1976. Former President Jimmy Carter and Mrs. Rosalyn Carter first partnered with Habitat in 1984 and have become Habitat's most famous spokespersons and volunteers.

Throughout the world, families in need of decent shelter apply to local Habitat affiliates for a solution to their housing problems. They could build and buy a new or renovated home or apply for assistance in repairing the home they already own. The affiliate's family selection committee chooses future homeowners based on their level of need, their willingness to become partners in the program, and their ability to repay the affordable loan. Every affiliate follows a non-discriminatory policy of family selection and must abide by federal fair housing regulations. Neither race nor religion is a factor in choosing the families who receive Habitat houses.

Donations, whether to a local Habitat affiliate or to HFHI, are used as designated by the donor. Gifts received by HFHI that are designated to a specific affiliate or building project are forwarded to that affiliate or project. Undesignated gifts are used where most needed.

### **Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity**

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity is the local affiliate of HFHI and has serviced Kalamazoo County since 1983. We are one of the oldest affiliates in the country. We also serve a portion of Allegan County -- the cities of Otsego and Plainwell and Gun Plain and Otsego townships. The Habitat approach unites volunteers and financial resources to dramatically impact the living conditions of low income families. Habitat is more than a home builder. Habitat acts as a land developer, financial institution, and social service agency. We also operate the Habitat ReStore at 7612 S. Westnedge Avenue, Portage.

Habitat builds or rehabilitates four to five affordable, energy efficient homes each year for sale without profit to qualified home buyers with affordable, nonprofit mortgage loans. The cost of home repairs varies from job to job. Habitat makes no profit from the homes it builds/rehabs and repairs. A typical Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity home is 1,050 square feet, with three bedrooms and one bathroom. Habitat also works in partnership with qualified homeowners to help them affordably repair their homes.

A volunteer board of directors governs Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity. Habitat is self-supporting and must raise funds to build and repair houses through many partnerships in the local community.

### **Vision and Mission Statement**

**Our Vision:** A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

**Our Mission:** Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

### **The Volunteer Relationship**

A volunteer is anyone who provides time and talent to Kalamazoo Valley Habitat through work on construction, office, committee, at the Habitat ReStore, or any other Habitat project. We thank you, and

all volunteers, for the personal investment you make in our organization and its mission. We strive to provide support, supervision, and recognition to our volunteers.

**As a volunteer you have the right to:**

1. Be assigned appropriate tasks according to ability, skill, interests, availability, and training.
2. Receive training and supervision for the tasks accepted.
3. Receive a job description for your assignment when appropriate.
4. Be treated as a fellow team member who contributes to Habitat goals through your volunteer work.
5. Make suggestions about your assignment and the Habitat volunteer program, and be acknowledged by staff.
6. Expect that Habitat will be a good steward of your time.
7. Be given appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
8. Be trusted with confidential information if needed to help carry out assignments.
9. Expect that records will be kept, documenting areas of interest or positions held (and if applicable, time spent volunteering, commendation, etc.).
10. Be treated with a spirit of friendliness and cooperation so that Habitat will continue to be known as a “great place to volunteer.”
11. A safe and inviting environment to work in that is free of harassment and discrimination.

**Habitat expects volunteers to:**

1. Know your own duties and stay on task.
2. Cooperate with staff and your fellow volunteers, and maintain a team attitude.
3. Voice your opinions and contribute your suggestions to improve Habitat’s work.
4. Sign in and out each time you arrive for a volunteer assignment.
5. Be on time for scheduled meetings and work assignments.
6. Honor your commitment and come when scheduled.
7. Treat all volunteers, staff, and homeowners with respect.

Remember, you help to create the healthful, pleasant, and safe volunteering conditions that Habitat intends for you. We need your help in making each volunteering day enjoyable and rewarding.

**Community Service**

Habitat 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 beginning and end of each day by a Habitat supervisor or duly appointed person. Hours worked, but not recorded or signed off at the end of each day of service, will not be counted.** Community service volunteers must also sign in and out on Habitat’s volunteer sign in sheets. This is the only information that will be entered in our data base.

For appropriate placement within our organization, Habitat reserves the right to know the offense related to court-ordered community service. In all other respects, court-ordered community service volunteers will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers.

**Orientation**

All volunteers must complete a volunteer orientation prior to service with Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity. This includes the completion of a volunteer release and waiver form. This information is confidential. Any questions should be directed to the Director of Volunteer Services.

## **POLICY MANUAL**

### **Age of Volunteers**

Habitat staff supervisors evaluate the abilities and competency of all volunteers and assign appropriate, safe activities as availability and conditions permit. Volunteers must be 16 years of age to work on Habitat construction sites or in the Habitat ReStore in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. Volunteers under 18 must present a waiver of liability form signed by a parent or legal guardian and must be accompanied by an adult when volunteering with Habitat. Habitat's Director of Volunteer Services will work with youth group leaders to provide opportunities for safe, meaningful participation in appropriate activities and settings that support our mission.

There is no maximum age for Habitat volunteers.

### **Safety**

You and Habitat share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. Habitat will attempt to ensure 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 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.

A first aid kit is located on all properties and at the construction sites. A supervisor will advise you of exact locations on site. AEDs are located at the Habitat office, Habitat ReStore, and on construction sites.

### **Absence and Lateness**

The positions that volunteers fill are critical to Habitat. If you fail to show up, others must take on the tasks you were expected to accomplish. If you are unable to attend a scheduled work day, or if you will arrive late, please contact your volunteer group leader or Habitat's Director of Volunteer Services 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 provided each volunteer day on site, or keep a log of your personal hours if spent off site.

### **Use of Habitat Vehicle**

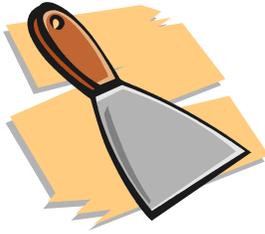
Volunteers may not drive Habitat vehicles. Habitat staff members are not allowed to provide transportation for volunteers except in extreme emergencies.

### **Confidential Information**

Habitat has an obligation to all of our partners -- home buyers, volunteers, staff, and donors -- to maintain their confidentiality and to respect their privacy. Every person served by Habitat has the right to confidentiality. At the same time, every volunteer must use his or her best judgment. If you are aware of an issue that requires immediate attention, especially if it involves volunteers, please direct your concern immediately to the Habitat Director of Volunteer Services or Executive Director.

## Harassment and Discrimination

Habitat 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 prohibits any actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's race, sex, sexual preferences, 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 disciplinary action.



Habitat prohibits any harassment between employees, volunteers or other non-employees on the basis of sex. No volunteer, male or female, should be subjected to unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtones and conduct, either verbal or physical. Misconduct applies to males and females, 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 they have been harassed must immediately report the matter to a Site Supervisor or the Executive Director. A grievance is then filed.

## Grievances

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, or an opinion or statement held by a staff member or fellow volunteer.

Volunteer grievances are of great concern to Habitat, regardless of whether the problem is large or small. To provide prompt and efficient evaluation of and response to grievances, Habitat has established a procedure for all volunteers. It is Habitat's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting a grievance. All grievances are handled confidentially.

The grievance procedure is:

1. If urgent action is needed, notify the site supervisor or site host immediately.
2. Attempt to discuss your grievance with your supervisor, Habitat's Director of Volunteer Services, or committee chairperson to work out the problem.
3. If you are unsatisfied, submit your complaint in writing to a supervisor, Habitat's Director of Volunteer Services, or committee chairperson.
4. A response should be made within five (5) business days.
5. If, within five (5) days, you are not satisfied with how your written complaint was handled, you may appeal by submitting your written complaint to the Executive Director. If the complaint is with the Executive Director, then submit it to the Board President.
6. The Executive Director or Board President should respond within five (5) business days.
7. If you are still unsatisfied, you may ask that your written complaint be taken to the executive committee of the board. Within 30 days, the executive committee will act on your grievance, affirming or denying your request, choosing to investigate further, or choosing to take the matter to the entire board. The executive committee's decision is final.

## Volunteer Conduct

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

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

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of Habitat property
- Misuse of agency funds, equipment, or materials
- Falsification of time-keeping 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 Habitat equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the work place
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place
- Negligent or improper conduct leading to the damage of property
- Repeated failure to follow a supervisor’s reasonable request or to carry out a reasonable 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 Habitat anti-discrimination policies and procedures
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the work place
- Excessive absenteeism without notice
- Releasing confidential information

## Hours of Operation

Location	Hours
Office	Monday- Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Habitat ReStore	Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm Saturday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Construction	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

## Contact Information

Location	Other Information
Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity 1126 Gull Road Kalamazoo MI 49048	Phone: (269) 344-2443 Fax: (269) 344-2252 Website: <a href="http://www.habitatkalamazoo.org">www.habitatkalamazoo.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:mailbox@habitatkalamazoo.org">mailbox@habitatkalamazoo.org</a>
Habitat ReStore 7612 S. Westnedge Avenue Portage, MI 49002	Phone : (269) 381-5523
Habitat Warehouse 1718 Fulford Avenue Kalamazoo MI 49001	Phone: (269) 553-1860
Habitat Community Garden 1747 Milham Avenue Portage MI 49024	Located behind Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

## VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am in receipt of the Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Handbook and Policy Manual and understand I should consult with Habitat's Director of Volunteer Services or the Executive Director if I have any questions about the policies or procedures contained therein.

I understand that from time to time there may be revisions to the Volunteer Handbook and Policy Manual. Such revisions will require the prior approval of the Executive Director and will be communicated to volunteers.

I have entered into my volunteer relationship with Habitat voluntarily and acknowledge there is no specified length of volunteering. Accordingly, either Habitat or I can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this manual is neither a contract of employment or volunteering, nor a legal document. Although some or all of the policies and procedures may have been explained to me verbally, I understand that it is my responsibility to fully read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

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Volunteer's Signature

Date Signed

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Volunteer's Name (print)