

VOLUNTEER

HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO OUR TEAM!



Welcome Message

Welcome to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity! You're entering an exciting organization that's touching countless lives in Northwestern Vermont. For over 40 years, our volunteers have helped build homes for our local communities in the fight for affordable housing. Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization, and their dedication to serving their neighbors is what keeps us going.

This handbook describes the benefits and responsibilities of your volunteer role at Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity. Please review it carefully. If a particular policy or procedure is unclear to you, please don't hesitate to ask questions or to discuss it with our Volunteer Manager. We hope your time at Habitat will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Yours in partnership,
The Team at Green Mountain Habitat

Organization Overview

Our Mission

Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, in partnership with families and the community, builds permanently affordable, energy-efficient homes in Vermont for families in need.

Our Vision

Our vision is a world where everyone in Northwestern Vermont has a decent and affordable place to live. We believe that no matter who we are or where we come from, we all deserve a decent place to live. We deserve to feel strength and stability day after day. We deserve to know we have the power to take care of ourselves and build our futures.

At Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, this is what unites us. Through shelter, we empower. Because you, me, we – we're all humans. And every single one of us deserves the opportunity for a better future. We're committed to creating affordable homeownership opportunities in Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Lamoille counties. Together, we can build homes, community, and hope in Northwest Vermont.

What We Do

In partnership with financial and ReStore donors, local families, and community volunteers, Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity builds and sells affordable homes in Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Lamoille counties. Habitat homebuyers help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through our efforts, over 120 local families have achieved the strength, stability, and independence they needed to build a better life for themselves and their families.



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This handbook will serve as a guide for volunteers. Everything you need to know and have.



Introduction

This handbook provides a general outline of our personnel policies. This handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question regarding your volunteer service. GMHFH reserves the right to change, add to, or eliminate any policies and/or benefits described in this handbook at any time.

Equal Opportunity

GMHFH provides equal opportunities to all volunteers regardless of race, color, age, ancestry, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, disability or military service. GMHFH expressly prohibits unlawful harassment or discrimination based on the abovementioned characteristics. Improper interference with the ability of other volunteers or employees to perform their expected job duties is not tolerated.

Any volunteers with questions or concerns about equal opportunities are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Volunteer Manager. GMHFH will not tolerate any form of retaliation against individuals who raise concerns of equal opportunity. If a volunteer feels they've been subjected to such retaliation from the Volunteer Manager, they should bring it to the attention of the ReStore Director and/or the Operations Director. Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below. "Adverse conduct" includes but is not limited to:

- Shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination, or retaliation;
- Expressed or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation;
- Denying employment opportunities or benefits because an applicant or employee reported harassment, discrimination, or retaliation or participated in the reporting and investigation process.

Complaints of discrimination should be filed according to the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure.

Americans with Disabilities Act & Reasonable Accommodation

To ensure equal opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, GMHFH will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of an otherwise qualified individual unless undue hardship on the operation of the business would result. Volunteers who may require reasonable accommodation should contact the Volunteer Manager.

Commitment to Diversity

GMHFH is committed to creating and maintaining a space where all volunteers can participate and contribute to its success and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in company policy and how we do business at GMHFH. All volunteers and staff must be accorded respect and consideration and feel that GMHFH provides a safe and productive workplace.



Volunteer Relationship



Nature of Volunteering

This handbook is not an employment or volunteer contract and is not intended to create a contractual obligation. Neither you nor GMHFH is bound to continue the volunteer relationship if either you or GMHFH chooses, at will, to end the relationship at any time. By becoming a volunteer with GMHFH you are agreeing to the general [Code of Conduct](#) which can be found on the website.

Personal Data Changes

Please make sure to notify GMHFH of any changes to your personal data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, and the names of individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency (an emergency phone number can be vital) should be kept accurate at all times. You may edit this information by logging into your Volunteer Up! account and clicking into “My Info”. If you have any questions about this or need assistance with access, please contact the Volunteer Manager.

Attendance & Punctuality

To ensure a smooth operation, we kindly request that volunteers extend Habitat’s common courtesy by signing up for shifts, informing us of absences, late arrivals, and early departures. Volunteers are essential to Habitat; we depend on and miss you when you are not here.

***Refer to Time Records about the Volunteer Up! system and clocking in and out.**



Community Service

GMHFH welcomes community service volunteers from civic groups, schools, community assistance programs, and the judicial system. The community service volunteer is responsible for maintaining an accurate timesheet and ensuring they sign in and out at the beginning and end of each day. Hours worked but not recorded will not be counted. GMHFH does not recognize breaks or lunches to be community service time. It should be further understood that only actual time worked will be credited for community service.

For the appropriate placement of court-ordered volunteers within our organization, individuals seeking to complete their hours must undergo an approval process that begins with an application and includes a conversation with the Volunteer Manager, relevant site managers and the Operations Director. GMHFH reserves the right to know the offense related to court-ordered community service. We typically do not accept court-ordered community service for any of the following charges:

- Any form of theft, i.e. burglary, larceny, petty theft, coercion, fraud, forgery, etc.
- Any violent crime, i.e. assault, domestic violence, etc.

In all other respects, court-ordered community service volunteers will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers.

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Work Environment


Safety

You and GMHFH share the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. GMHFH will attempt to ensure a safe work environment and comply with federal, state, and local safety regulations. You are expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution in all your work activities. You are also asked to report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately. Any accident resulting in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to your supervisor. GMHFH has several first aid kits in various areas on our property; please see the supervisor of your site for exact locations.

Drug & Alcohol - Free Workplace

It is the policy of GMHFH to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free environment that is safe and productive for volunteers, employees, and others having business with the company. The unlawful use, possession, purchase, sale, distribution, or being under the influence of any illegal drugs and/or the misuse of legal drugs while on company or client premises or while performing services for the company is strictly prohibited. GMHFH also prohibits reporting to work or performing services under the influence of alcohol or consuming alcohol while volunteering. In addition, GMHFH prohibits off-premise abuse of alcohol and controlled substances, as well as the possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs, when these activities adversely affect volunteer performance, safety, or GMHFH's reputation in the community. To ensure compliance with this policy, substance abuse screening may be conducted upon reasonable suspicion that the volunteer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could affect or have adversely affected the employee's job performance.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of volunteering. Volunteers who test positive or who refuse to submit to substance abuse screening will be subject to termination. Notwithstanding any provision, this policy shall be enforced in accordance with applicable state and local laws. Any volunteer violating this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for the first offense.



Smoke - Free Workplace

Smoking is not allowed in GMHFH buildings or work areas at any time. "Smoking" includes using tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes. Smoking is only permitted during break times in designated outdoor areas. Volunteers using these areas are expected to dispose of any smoking debris safely and adequately.

Workplace Violence Prevention

GMHFH is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our volunteers. Due to this commitment, we discourage volunteers from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any volunteers or employees will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions are taken for intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior in the workplace or at company-sponsored functions.

All GMHFH volunteers and employees are responsible for protecting our work environment from violence or potential violence. Any volunteer or employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their supervisor, manager, the ReStore Director, or the Operations Manager. All threats will be swiftly investigated under this guideline, and no employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or disciplinary action for reporting a threat in good faith.

Any individual engaging in violence against the company, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.



"Making the choice to be free of violence, for yourself and for the world, is one of the most powerful choices you can make."
- The Commons Social Good Library

Workplace Violence Prevention

- Weapons

GMHFH prohibits the possession of weapons on its premises at all times, including our parking lots, building sites, or company vehicles. Additionally, while on-site, volunteers are prohibited from carrying any kind of weapon. Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, and knives that can be used as weapons (excluding construction site equipment, pocketknives, utility knives, and other instruments that are used to open packages, cut string, and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas. Any volunteer violating this policy is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for the first offense.

The company reserves the right to inspect all volunteers' belongings on its premises, including packages, briefcases, purses and handbags, gym bags, and personal vehicles on company property.



Volunteer Conduct & Work Rules

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

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of GMHFH property.
 - Falsification of timekeeping records.
 - Working under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or legal drugs, including marijuana.
 - Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcoholic, illegal drugs, or legal drugs, including marijuana, in the workplace.
 - Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
 - Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
 - Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of GMHFH's or another person's property.
 - Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct or language.
 - Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable request or to carry out a reasonable job assignment.
 - Violation of safety or health rules.
 - Smoking in GMHFH buildings or vehicles.
 - False accusation of harassment, unlawful discrimination, or disparaging treatment by one volunteer to another or an employee.
 - Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination.
 - Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
 - Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or any absences without notice.
 - Unauthorized or improper use of telephones, mail system, or other GMHFH-owned equipment.
 - Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
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Harassment Policy


Sexual and other unlawful harassment violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, and many state laws. Harassment based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law, is prohibited.

It is GMHFH's policy to provide an environment that reinforces the founding principles of our organization and is free of sexual and other harassment. To that end, harassment of GMHFH's volunteers by management, staff, or nonemployees in the workplace is prohibited. Further, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. GMHFH will take all steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

Definition of Harassment

Definition of Unlawful Harassment: "unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's opportunities because of the individual's membership in a protected class. Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

Definition of Sexual Harassment. "Sexual harassment" is generally defined under both state and federal law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.



Harassment Policy Continued

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to volunteers or staff may also constitute sexual harassment. While it's not possible to list all the additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwanted sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

All volunteers and employees should note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated at GMHFH.



Complaint Procedure

Any volunteer who believes they have been subject to or witnessed illegal discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, is requested and encouraged to make a complaint. We believe the quickest way to resolve problems is to approach the individual(s) involved so an appropriate solution can be reached. If, however, this does not lead to a resolution, or you feel uncomfortable discussing the matter with the individual directly, you can make a complaint directly to your immediate supervisor, the department manager (if they are not the ones you are having a problem with), the Volunteer Manager or any other member of management with whom you feel comfortable bringing such a complaint. Similarly, if you observe acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another employee, you are requested and encouraged to report this to one of the individuals listed above. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction at this level, you can take your concern to the Operations Director.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against a volunteer for making a complaint, a report of discrimination or harassment, or assisting in investigating any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified above. All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, concerning confidentiality. If the investigation confirms that conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, GMHFH will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including immediate termination.



Co-worker Relations

While GMHFH desires every volunteer to receive fair and impartial treatment, it does recognize that conflicts, misunderstandings, and problems will arise from time to time. These concerns or problems may involve other volunteers, supervisors, or GMHFH 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 directly inform the person who is the source or cause of the problem or concern that there is 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.

Equipment

Use of the forklift is prohibited for all volunteers. Using the truck, truck lift, and power tools in the store workshop requires permission from the store manager or assistant store manager. All volunteers at construction sites must have approval and proper instruction from a project manager before using any power tool.

Use of Telephones, Cell Phones, and Headphones

To ensure effective communication while on the telephone, you are expected to use a proper greeting and to speak courteously and professionally. Please confirm the information received from the caller and hang up only after the caller has done so. All volunteers answering the phones must know how to receive and communicate telephone messages properly. Personal use of GMHFH phones is permissible, provided calls are local, of an essential nature, and short duration.

Personal cell phones may be used during breaks, whether in the break room or outside, but please avoid using them otherwise. No headphones may be worn during volunteer shifts.

***Use of headphones may be permitted with Reasonable Accommodation.**

Time Records

We ask that all volunteers sign up for their shifts using their Volunteer Up! account in advance to help us prepare for the day. If you are volunteering in the ReStore, it is required to clock in and out for your shift using the appropriate iPad kiosk at each ReStore location. If you are volunteering on the build site, your hours will be recorded as long as you have signed up for the shift and attended. If you left early or arrived late, please notify the Volunteer Manager so the hours can be adjusted. If you are completing community service hours for school, work, or a court-ordered community service requirement, you are responsible for accurately logging your hours. Any hours worked and not logged will not be counted. You may request a copy of your hours at any time.

***Step-by-step guides are available on the website.**



Things Every Volunteer Should Know

Dress & Grooming

Volunteers should wear work-appropriate and comfortable clothing, closed-toed shoes (work boots being preferred). If volunteering in the ReStore, volunteer vests are required, as they help customers identify those who are volunteers/staff. If volunteering on the build site and the task should call for it, personal protective equipment (PPE), including hard hats, earplugs, work gloves, safety glasses, and dust masks, should be worn. All volunteers are prohibited from wearing cut-off, stained, or ripped clothes; tight-fitting, low-cut, or sheer skirts or shorts that are too short; and sandals. All volunteers and employees should wash their hands properly, frequently, and at appropriate times, and should practice good personal hygiene habits.

Volunteer Bulletin Boards

Each ReStore has a Volunteer Bulletin Board on the sales floor for general announcements, recognition of Volunteer of the Month, upcoming events, etc. If a volunteer wishes to do so, they may submit to the Volunteer Manager recreational announcements, club functions, postcards, expressions of gratitude or sympathy. The Volunteer Manager and ReStore Manager will approve, post, and take down all notices. GMHFH reserves the right to refuse permission to post or to take down any announcement.



Gifts & Gratuities

To ensure the integrity of GMHFH and the unbiased actions and decision-making of Habitat volunteers, the acceptance of gifts and gratuities from customers, suppliers, partners, or anyone GMHFH in a business relationship is strictly prohibited. Further, any honoraria received by any GMHFH volunteer for speaking on behalf of Habitat must promptly be remitted to GMHFH.

Discounts & Purchases

In appreciation for all the hard work our volunteers do on our build sites and in our ReStores, we offer a 20% discount to those who volunteer at least once a month. Items need to be priced before purchase. Items in the backroom that are not priced will need to be priced by a manager before purchase. Items purchased out of the backroom do not qualify for 20% off. Any item on the sales floor with a price sticker may be purchased with the 20% off discount. Volunteers must be cashed out by or with the approval of a supervisor or ReStore Manager, and they must take a receipt for proof of purchase.



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ORGANIZATION

CONTACT INFORMATION AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Administrative Office

400 Cornerstone Drive, Suite 315, Williston, VT 05495
Mailing Address: PO Box 1436, Williston, VT 05495
Phone: (802) 872-8726

Habitat ReStore, Williston

528 Essex Road/Route 2A, Williston, VT 05495
Phone: (802) 857-5296 x2
Open Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat-Sun 10-5

Habitat ReStore, Milton

414 Route 7 South, Milton, VT 05468
Phone: (802) 857-5296 x3
Open Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat-Sun 10-5

Habitat ReStore, Swanton

104 Robin Hood Drive, Swanton, VT 05488
Phone: (802) 857-5296 x4
Open Wed-Fri 9-3, Sat-Sun 9-5
Donation Lane is open Thurs and Sat

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



@greenmountainhabitat
@greenmountainrestore



**“We learn about
service, we learn
about love, and
we talk about it.
But Habitat lets
us put it all into
practice.”
- President
Jimmy Carter**



Volunteer Manager

528 Essex Rd/Route 2A, Suite 207, Williston, VT 05495
(Upstairs Habitat ReStore Office)
E-mail: volunteer@vermonthabitat.org
Phone: (802) 598-0355

ReStore Director

528 Essex Rd/Route 2A, Suite 207, Williston, VT 05495
(Upstairs Habitat ReStore Office)
E-mail: asenesac@vermonthabitat.org
Phone: (802) 881-2436

Affiliate Operations Director

400 Cornerstone Drive, Suite 315, Williston, VT 05495
Email: jgoldhammer@vermonthabitat.org
Phone: (802) 872-8726 x102