



Habitat for Humanity[®] of East Polk County



volunteer handbook

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general information and contact details

Habitat for Humanity of East Polk County

3550 Recker Highway

Winter Haven, FL 33880

www.habitateastpolk.org

(863) 292-2256

Office hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm (by appointment only)

Habitat East Polk ReStores

Winter Haven:

3550 Recker Hwy, Winter Haven FL 33880

(863) 292-2256

Store hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 9am – 5pm

Dundee:

27985 US Hwy 27, Dundee FL 33838

(863) 292-2256

Store hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 9am - 5pm

Community Engagement email: volunteer@habitateastpolk.org

Volunteer Portal: habitateastpolk.cervistech.com

welcome to habitat for humanity of east polk county

Thank you for supporting Habitat for Humanity of East Polk County.

We hope that your time and efforts with Habitat will prove enjoyable and fulfilling. Volunteers are the heart of Habitat for Humanity; from construction to ReStores, from special events to committees, volunteers are the center of our organization.

This handbook will provide general policies and practices for volunteers at Habitat East Polk. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook, as it will answer many questions and outline the expectations of volunteers. It describes many of your responsibilities as a volunteer and describes the programs developed by Habitat East Polk to benefit volunteers. If you have questions or concerns about the materials in this handbook, please feel free to contact the Community Engagement Manager.

In order to retain the necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, Habitat East Polk reserves the right to amend, revise, or supplement any of the policies and/or benefits described in this manual as needed.

about us

Habitat for Humanity

Driven by the vision that everyone should have a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity found its earliest inspirations as a grassroots movement on an interracial community farm in southern Georgia. Since its founding in 1976, the Christian housing organization has grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in local communities across all 50 states in the U.S. and in more than 70 countries. People in need of decent, affordable housing partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering, or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help people achieve the strength, stability, and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. Through shelter, we empower. To learn more, visit [habitat.org](https://www.habitat.org).

Habitat for Humanity of East Polk County

Habitat East Polk, established in 1987, has built over 175 affordable homes in partnership with qualified homebuyers and with the support of volunteers and sponsors. Two ReStore locations, in Winter Haven and Dundee, help fund our efforts to positively impact communities as we strive for a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

volunteer opportunities

Key Volunteers

Volunteers who partner with Habitat East Polk for extended periods of service are referred to as “Key Volunteers.” These volunteers fulfill many roles, but have committed to at least six months of service, typically with at least one shift per week. Key Volunteers receive 25% discount in the ReStores and are eligible for merch and other volunteer incentive programs.

Construction

Hundreds of volunteers come together each year to help Habitat build homes – nail by nail, and board by board. Volunteers work on nearly every facet of home construction, helping with dozens of tasks ranging from painting and tiling to framing and insulating. Most construction volunteers need not have prior experience in construction.

Site Lead

A volunteer member of our construction management team, responsible for task performance, site organization, and job safety on a specific build project. They also have the opportunity to train and mentor less experienced volunteers. Site Leads share in creating a volunteer culture of positivity and safety-awareness.

ReStores

Our ReStores sell donated materials to cover the administrative costs of Habitat East Polk. ReStores depend on volunteers to keep the inventory current and provide customers with a quality experience. Opportunities include cleaning, stocking, customer service, donation processing/receiving, merchandising, and much more.

Office Support

Volunteers assist in the Habitat office to help with clerical projects, answering phones, and data entry; they can also help with filing and mailing needs.

Special Events

Special events are incredible ways for Habitat to raise our visibility in the community and funds for the program. Look out for opportunities to be part of these meaningful and memorable moments.

Executive Committees

We have various volunteer-based committees that drive and support the work of Habitat. Qualified volunteers may sit on these committees with approval from the Executive Director.

Homebuyer Selection Committee

This committee is responsible for drafting the selection criteria and application forms, screening applications, interviewing applicants, and recommending applicants to the Board of Directors for approval as prospective homeowners.

Homeowner Support Committee

This committee is responsible for providing Habitat homeowners and prospective homeowners with a mutual support system, educational opportunities, and a forum for discussions pertaining to home ownership and maintenance.

Finance Committee

This committee routinely reviews the fiscal position of Habitat East Polk and forecasts our ability to undertake construction projects.

Fundraising Committee

This committee works in conjunction with the Executive Director to create fundraising events and opportunities to expand our capacity to build.

ReStore Committee

This committee supports the operations of the ReStores and works with management to identify potential donations, sales events, and store improvements.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is a specialized group of long-term volunteers who oversee Habitat East Polk. Appointment to the board is by invitation and approval of the Board of Directors; those who are interested typically begin their service as committee members.

volunteer eligibility

Habitat welcomes supporters and volunteers from all backgrounds and serves people in need of decent housing regardless of race or religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or political views.

Volunteer Screening and Approval

Onboarding volunteers can take up to ten business days. Potential volunteers create an account on the volunteer portal (CERVIS) and submit their profile; once approved, they can sign up for volunteer shifts. If you require accommodations to use the volunteer portal, please contact the Community Engagement Manager. Habitat East Polk reserves the right to conduct volunteer interviews as a part of the onboarding process.

Habitat East Polk requires that sex offender registry checks be conducted for all volunteers, utilizing the National Sex Offender Registry (<http://www.nsopw.gov>) and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offenders and Predators Search (<https://offender.fdle.state.fl.us/>). Any person who does not consent to a sex offender registry check will not be permitted to volunteer with Habitat East Polk. Prospective volunteers who are found on the sex offender registry will be prohibited from volunteering with Habitat East Polk. Habitat East Polk reserves the right to recheck sex offender status at any time during the course of volunteer service. By completing this application, you are submitting to such inquiry.

Habitat East Polk may also require that criminal background checks be conducted for court-ordered community service, volunteers entering the home of a Habitat homeowner or donor, volunteers working with youth, key volunteers, and those serving on the board or a committee. Any person who does not consent to a criminal background check will not be permitted to become a volunteer with Habitat East Polk.

Habitat for Humanity does not proselytize, nor will Habitat work with those who insist on proselytizing as part of their work with Habitat. Habitat will not offer assistance on the expressed or implied condition that people must adhere to or convert to a particular faith. We also will not require participants to listen and respond to messaging designed to induce conversion to a particular faith.

All individuals at Habitat East Polk worksites must be registered and approved volunteers.

Youth Volunteers

Habitat East Polk welcomes volunteers of all ages. In recognition of federal labor laws regarding children and the potential risk to children's safety on a construction site, no one under the age of 16 is allowed on an active construction site. No one under the age of 18 may participate in hazardous activities, which include the use of power tools or motor vehicles, demolition, roofing, working from a height of six feet or more, and excavation operations.

Volunteers under the age of 18 must have their parent/guardian sign their liability waiver on the volunteer portal.

Volunteers aged 16-17

There shall be a minimum of one adult supervisor for every three volunteers aged 16-17 on construction sites, at the ReStores, and during special projects.

Volunteers aged 14-15

At age 14-15, volunteers must be supervised 1:1 by a parent or guardian at ReStores and during special projects, but may not participate on build sites.

Future Builders – under the age of 14

Our youngest volunteers may not be able to participate in building homes just yet... but we still have fun and engaging options available! Future Builder special projects may include decorative rock painting, birdhouse building, LEGO builds and more!

Court-Ordered Community Service Volunteers

Court-ordered community service volunteers are welcome at Habitat East Polk, provided that they meet background check requirements. We are unable to accommodate community service hours for persons convicted of violent felonies, offenses against minors, or offenses of a sexual nature; other felonies and crimes against property may be accepted at the discretion of the Executive Director.

It is the volunteer's responsibility to pay for a background check and supply court paperwork for approval.

Court-ordered community service volunteers must complete their hours at our ReStores; community service cannot be completed on construction sites.

Former Employees

Previous employees in good standing are eligible to volunteer at Habitat East Polk with approval of the Executive Director. A period of 90 days must elapse after the last date of employment before former employees can submit a volunteer application.

volunteer policies

Rights of Volunteers

- The right to a safe volunteer environment
- The right to information about the volunteer role or project
- The right to negotiate the volunteer role
- The right to provide feedback on the volunteer role and experience
- The right to discontinue volunteer service

Right of Refusal

Volunteers are free to accept or refuse any given assignment. Supervisors are expected to seek a reasonable alternative task or assignment; there may, however, be situations where an alternative assignment is not available.

- If the reason for refusal of the assignment is discriminatory, Habitat East Polk reserves the right to not provide an alternative assignment
- Alternative tasks may not be available in the ReStore or construction sites due to timing or daily workload
- Volunteer opportunities are based on the needs of Habitat East Polk; at any given time, alternative placement may not be available

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of Habitat East Polk, or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. Dismissal is the revocation of the volunteer's ability to participate in Habitat opportunities at any Habitat East Polk location or area.

Staff have the right to ask volunteers to leave for the day when the volunteer is in violation of our policies and safety guidelines. When asked to leave for the day, volunteers should await communication from staff regarding resumption of volunteer duties.

Alcohol/Drug Policy

Habitat East Polk is concerned with the health, well-being, and safety of its volunteers. As an organization, we are obligated to provide a drug-free, healthy, and safe work environment.

Use of alcohol and/or drugs alter volunteers' judgment resulting in increased safety risks, injuries, and faulty decision-making. Therefore, volunteering after the apparent use of alcohol, a controlled substance, or abuse of any other substances is prohibited. Furthermore, the possession, purchase, consumption (use), unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, or sale of a controlled substance or alcohol on Habitat premises or while

conducting Habitat business is prohibited. Alcoholic beverages in conjunction with an authorized event are an exception to this prohibition.

Weapon Policy

Habitat East Polk volunteer sites shall be considered a weapon-free zone. Anything that can be used as a weapon, with the exception of a pocketknife, may be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Safeguarding Policy

Habitat for Humanity is opposed to any form of discrimination, exploitation, or abuse. This includes slavery, coerced conscription, prostitution, trafficking of people for any purpose, vulnerable adult or child abuse, and dangerous or exploitative child labor. In the design and implementation of programs and policies, we seek always to work without bias; to do no harm; and to eliminate (rather than contribute to) the harm of discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

All Habitat representatives commit to respecting and safeguarding the rights and dignities of all people, and protecting our staff members, volunteers, partners, research participants, community members (especially vulnerable adults and children), and those we intend to serve from exploitation and abuse. This includes the following general standards of behavior at all times, even when on leave or off duty:

- Habitat representatives will not engage in any form of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior toward those we intend to serve in any circumstances
- Habitat representatives will not engage in any abuse of authority, position or influence
- Habitat representatives will help to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and that safeguards the rights of those we intend to serve, research participants, and community members (especially vulnerable adults and children)
- Habitat representatives will never engage in sexual exploitation or abuse, or engage in sexual activity with a child (anyone who is not yet 18 years old) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Habitat representatives will not engage in a sexual relationship with those we intend to serve, since it is based on inherently unequal power dynamics
- Habitat representatives will keep the health and safety of children paramount at all times, and will work to ensure that personal dignity and respect for children is maintained through all projects, programs and departments
- Habitat representatives will apply measures to reduce the risk of child abuse, exploitation or neglect, including but not limited to:
 - Limiting unsupervised interactions with children
 - Prohibiting exposure to pornography
 - Complying with appropriate data responsibility standards and with applicable laws, regulations or customs regarding the photographing, filming or other image-generating activities of children, and audio recordings.

Reporting Responsibility

Volunteers at Habitat have responsibility to report potential safeguarding misconduct and noncompliance. Volunteers can report concerns to the Community Engagement Manager or Executive Director, submit a report via the [Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line](#), or call (800) 461-9330 for incidents in the following categories: harassment, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual exploitation and neglect.

No Retaliation

Habitat East Polk will not retaliate against any volunteer who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of Habitat East Polk or another individual or entity with whom we have a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, a clear mandate, or public policy. No volunteer who in good faith reports a violation of the above shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence.

Dress Code

Habitat East Polk requires volunteers to maintain appropriate attire during shifts worked

- Closed-toe shoes are mandatory; a non-slip sole is highly recommended
 - Foam shoes (such as Crocs) are not allowed for safety reasons
- Volunteers should wear apparel that is appropriate for their specific work area and weather conditions
- We recommend long pants for safety reasons, but due to Florida heat appropriate-length shorts are acceptable
- ReStore and special project volunteers cannot wear tank tops
- ReStore volunteers must wear provided aprons
- Construction volunteers must wear provided safety gear
- When necessary, volunteers must wear personal protective equipment
- No loose jewelry or clothing due to risk of snagging
- Profane and offensive imagery on clothing or accessories is prohibited
- All clothes should well-fitting and undergarments should not be visible

Homebuyer Program

Volunteering at Habitat East Polk does not guarantee or influence selection for our homebuyer program.

Internet Use

All Habitat East Polk representatives are prohibited from accessing, possessing or circulating pornographic content using Habitat computers, Habitat-supported electronic devices, Habitat email accounts, Habitat-related electronic distribution lists, or an internet connection paid for by Habitat East Polk. This includes sharing of emails or group texts (including jokes) containing explicit images.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are bound to confidentiality, just as paid staff are. Information regarding Habitat Future Homeowners, mortgages, and financial information should not be disclosed.

Working Conditions

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to agency property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment.

As a policy, each volunteer at a Habitat for Humanity work site should:

- Comply with all safety rules and regulations
- Report all accidents and injuries immediately
- Obtain the proper tools and personal protective equipment for the job at hand
- Report all unsafe conditions to the supervisor in charge
- Know what emergency telephone number to call in case of fire or an accident
- Help maintain a safe and clean work area
- Receive on-site safety training

Inclusion

In order for Habitat East Polk to be a place of welcome, we are proactively committing to policies, procedures, and actions that invite all to join this movement. We also commit to listening deeply and responding in a timely and appropriate manner when concerns are brought to the attention of the Community Engagement Manager. Habitat East Polk also seeks to eliminate systemic barriers to full participation and promote positive relations among those of different race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, political stances, or any other distinction. Discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated and is grounds for dismissal of a volunteer.

Authorized Representatives

Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the agency only as specifically indicated within their position descriptions and to the extent authorized therein.

Media

Members of the media are occasionally on the construction site and at Habitat special events. Keep the following things in mind if you work with members of the media:

- Do not comment to the media on behalf of Habitat East Polk – keep remarks limited to personal experiences or opinions
- You do not have to answer any questions you are uncomfortable answering
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" – provide accurate information only
- Do not speak on behalf of Habitat without prior authorization from the Executive Director

Attendance and Punctuality

Volunteers are expected to be reliable in the performance of their duties. Volunteer attendance is expected to be dependable and punctual. In order to ensure a smooth operation, Habitat asks volunteers to inform us of absences, late arrivals, and early departures. In return, Habitat will let volunteers know as soon as possible of any changes in scheduling or cancellations. Volunteers must maintain an accurate schedule on the volunteer portal. Failure to do so may result in dismissal.

Transportation to and from volunteer assignments is the responsibility of the volunteer. Habitat East Polk staff are unable to remain on-site to accommodate pick-up and drop-off schedules and are prohibited from arranging or providing transportation.

Personal Information Changes

Volunteers must notify Habitat East Polk of any changes in personal information; mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, etc. should be accurate at all times. Volunteers must update their portal profile to reflect any changes in a timely manner.

Attendance Records

Volunteers are required to schedule their shifts in advance via the volunteer portal, and to sign in/out of each shift online. Failure to do so may result in volunteer dismissal.

Volunteers can print attendance/service records independently via the volunteer portal; any additional documentation needed must be provided to the Community Engagement Manager at least one week ahead of the time is needed in order to allow time for completion.

Hiring Former Volunteers

Volunteers are eligible for employment with Habitat East Polk; however, volunteer engagement does not guarantee placement in open job positions. Additionally, a period of two weeks must elapse from the final volunteer service date to start of employment in order to create a clear separation between volunteer and employee status.