



# Volunteer Guide

# May 2025

## About Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity, founded in 1976, is a global Christian non profit organization that grew out of an intentionally multiracial community in rural Georgia. Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat brings together people of all faiths and people of no faith to build homes, communities and hope. Working alongside each other, we help families and individuals build and improve places to call home and achieve the strength, stability, and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. Habitat seeks to engage volunteers who have a willingness to affirm these principles and values.

At Habitat for Humanity, we embrace a history rooted in creating equity and take our mission seriously by courageously coming into a culture and workplace where all feel safe, welcome, visible, respected, supported and valued. As an equal opportunity organization, we realize that our success depends upon building an inclusive workforce and volunteer force of diverse perspectives and encouraging people of varied races; ethnicities; national origins; tribes; religions; ages; gender identities and expressions; sexual orientations; marital statuses; disabilities; veteran, Reserve or National Guard statuses; socioeconomic statuses; and thinking and communication styles to engage with us.

We also require that all staff members and volunteers take seriously their ethical responsibilities to safeguarding our intended beneficiaries, their communities (especially children), and all those with whom we work. In line with the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, certain volunteer positions require a sex offender and/or criminal background check. All volunteers will be held accountable to upholding our policies on ethical behavior, including safeguarding and whistleblowing.

## About Bennington County Habitat for Humanity

We were founded in 1997 by a group of volunteers, who noticed the need for affordable homeownership opportunities locally. While many things have changed since 1997, this simple fact has not. There are numerous programs throughout the state that focus on affordable housing, but none do quite as well as Habitat regarding affordable homeownership. We believe that the differentiating factor of homeownership is how we make a lasting impact on our community.

Since 1997 we have built 41 affordable homes in and around Bennington County. We are on pace to complete between three and four homes each year moving forward. While the heavy discounts from suppliers, donated time by subcontractors, and grants we receive all heavily impact our ability to build and deliver affordable homes, it is the volunteers who truly have the largest impact. You are the reason we are able to build in an affordable way, and without you the impact of Habitat locally would be minimal, if it existed at all. The more volunteers we have participating, the more work we can do, and the more individuals and families in our community will be able to purchase their affordable homes.

*Thank you for being a part of our mission, and thank you for the impact you have made, and will make here.*

# The Commitment

At Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, we understand that our volunteers lead busy lives, and we're grateful for any time you're able to give. Whether you serve once or on a regular basis, your commitment helps us reach our daily and long-term goals.

## Typical Schedule

Volunteer opportunities are generally available **Wednesday through Saturday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**, depending on the service location (construction site, ReStore, or office). Construction shifts are 6 hours, ReStore shifts are 3 hours, and office shifts are flexible.

## Length of Service

Volunteers are asked to stay for their **entire scheduled shift** to ensure the day's work can be completed safely and efficiently. If you are unable to stay for a full shift, we're happy to accommodate whenever possible—we simply ask for **advance notice** so we can plan accordingly.

You are welcome to volunteer for a **single shift or on a recurring basis**. While not required, we encourage volunteers to commit to a **weekly or monthly schedule** when possible, as it helps us with planning and continuity.

## Schedule Changes

Volunteer schedules are subject to change. In the rare event that a shift must be canceled or rescheduled, Habitat staff will do everything possible to provide **timely notice**.

We appreciate your flexibility, reliability, and dedication—every hour you give helps us build something lasting.

# Volunteer Responsibilities

By volunteering with Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, you are making an important commitment to our mission. We ask that all volunteers agree to the following responsibilities to ensure a positive, safe, and effective environment for all:

- **Complete Required Volunteer Waivers**

All volunteers must complete the necessary Habitat volunteer waivers. These are now available online through our scheduling system, VolunteerUP!

- **Adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Volunteers must follow the Habitat Volunteer Code of Conduct as outlined in this handbook. It serves as a guide to maintaining professionalism and respect in all volunteer interactions.

- **Foster a Safe and Inclusive Environment**

Volunteers are expected to contribute to a culture that is respectful, inclusive, and safe for everyone. This includes abiding by all safety policies and procedures in place at the construction site, ReStore, and other volunteer settings.

- **Follow Leadership Directions**

Volunteers should take direction on assigned tasks from Construction & Habitat ReStore leadership. This ensures that we meet our goals while maintaining a safe and productive environment.

- **Communicate Effectively**

Clear communication is key. Volunteers should strive to communicate respectfully and effectively with staff, team members, and leadership to promote collaboration and transparency.

- **Respect Time and Commitments**

Volunteers are asked to respect the time and commitment required for scheduled shifts. If you are unable to attend or need to adjust your schedule, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

- **Uphold Ethical Responsibilities**

Volunteers have an ethical responsibility to safeguard the well-being of our intended beneficiaries, their communities (especially children), and all those we work with. This includes the confidentiality of our partner families, and any other information a volunteer may become privy to.

In line with the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, all volunteers must pass a sex offender registry background check. Volunteers classified as key volunteers must also pass a thorough background screening.

We deeply appreciate your commitment to these responsibilities, as they ensure that we provide a safe, welcoming, and effective environment for both volunteers and the communities we serve.

# Communication & Feedback

Clear, respectful communication is essential to our success as a team. At Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, we aim to foster a culture where volunteers feel heard, informed, and supported in their roles.

## Day-to-Day Communication

Volunteers are encouraged to stay in regular contact with their site or department supervisor. Most communication happens via email or in person, though phone calls are also used when appropriate. If you're unsure whom to contact, the Community Engagement Manager can help direct your question or concern to the right person.

## Sharing Ideas & Feedback

We value your perspective and welcome your input on how we can improve. Volunteers are encouraged to reach out to the Community Engagement Manager with suggestions, concerns, or reflections about their experience. We also hope to introduce occasional surveys to gather broader feedback in the future.

## When Issues Arise

If you experience a problem or conflict during your volunteer service, we encourage you to speak up. Most concerns can be resolved through open, respectful conversation. If you're not comfortable addressing the issue with your direct supervisor, you may contact:

- The Community Engagement Manager
- If the concern involves the Community Engagement Manager, you may reach out to the Executive Director
- If the issue involves the Executive Director, it may be brought to the President of the Board of Directors

All concerns will be handled with discretion and a focus on resolution. Our goal is to ensure that every volunteer feels safe, respected, and valued in their work with Habitat.

# Dress Code

As a representative of Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, we ask all volunteers to dress appropriately for their role, keeping both safety and professionalism in mind.

## General Guidelines

- Clothing should be clean, free from stains, rips, or paint splatter unless such wear is a result of the day's work (excluding construction volunteers)
- Please avoid clothing with images or language that could be considered offensive, inappropriate, or not in keeping with Habitat's mission
- For safety, avoid loose or baggy clothing that could get caught on tools, equipment, or shelving

## ReStore Volunteers

- Volunteers should arrive in clean, laundered clothing free of strong odors or accumulated dust
- Clothing should reflect a tidy, approachable appearance, appropriate for interacting with the public
- All volunteers and ReStore Staff Members should wear a ReStore branded apron and name tag
  - We even have fun flair to customize your apron!

## Construction Site Volunteers

- Work clothes should be functional and safe for a construction environment.
- Close-toed shoes (preferably work boots) are required.
- Volunteers must wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) required by the Construction Supervisor, such as hard hats, safety glasses, gloves, or high-visibility vests.

## PPE Policy

All Habitat ReStore and construction site staff, volunteers, and visitors are required to wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) deemed necessary by the Construction Manager and/or the Construction Supervisor, based on the activity at hand.

If you are unsure what to wear, or whether PPE will be provided or required, please reach out to us before your shift. Your comfort and safety are important to us.

# Recognition & Appreciation

At Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, we don't take our volunteers for granted. You are the reason we're able to build homes, communities, and hope—and we're grateful every day for your time, energy, and heart.

## How We Say Thank You

We show our appreciation in many ways, including:

- Occasional shout-outs on social media (with your permission)
- Our annual Volunteer Appreciation Night in spring, a special evening of food, drinks, and celebration
- Acknowledging long-term contributions with green hard hats on construction sites and tenure buttons at the ReStore

## Quiet Dedication, Lasting Impact

Many of our volunteers are modest about their work and don't expect recognition. Still, we believe it's important to say thank you—whether in public or private—because your presence makes a difference. Whether you're here once a month or several times a week, your contribution matters.

We're always looking for meaningful ways to recognize and support our volunteers. If you have ideas, or if there's something that would make your experience more fulfilling, please let us know. You deserve to feel appreciated—for all the right reasons.

# Orientation and Trainings

## Required Volunteer Orientation

We do not have an official “orientation” to be a volunteer. Since we are a smaller affiliate, we have the great opportunity for more one-on-one interactions. The information on our website, within this packet, and discussions with Habitat staff members serves as our “orientation”.

## Safety Training

- **Habitat Restore** safety video, to be watched before your first volunteer shift
- **Habitat Construction** safety video, to be viewed before your first volunteer shift
  - Safety huddles at the beginning of **every** volunteer shift

## Additional Training

- On-the-job training for Habitat ReStore & Construction projects and tasks
- Any additional training will be at the discretion of the ReStore Manager, Construction Manager and/or Supervisor, and Habitat office staff
- Optional virtual training to learn more about Habitat for Humanity’s history and mission

*Additional training opportunities for volunteer leaders are available.*

## Benefits of volunteering

- Making a difference by helping meet a critical community need
- Networking with and meeting new community members and invitations to local Habitat for Humanity volunteer events
- Positive social and physical health benefits
- Learning new skills
- 80% of hiring managers agree that active volunteers advance into leadership roles more easily.
- 67% of volunteers report an increase in leadership skills
- For every 100 hours of volunteering, the number of reported skills acquired increases 17%
- 82% of hiring managers say they are more likely to choose an applicant with volunteer experience
- 85% of hiring managers say they are willing to overlook other resume flaws if it includes volunteering
- Individuals who volunteer when out of work have a 27% higher chance of landing a job than those who don't volunteer
- Volunteering can provide mental, physical, and social benefits, and in some cases even reduce PTSD
- Volunteering can give you a better sense of connection to the local community
- 80% of volunteers report an increase in both their communication skills, and their influencing abilities
- Volunteering during college is associated with personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and satisfaction
- Volunteering in high school can make you stand out on your college applications

# Parting Ways with Volunteers

At Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, we are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and heart that each volunteer contributes. Volunteers are the backbone of our organization, and our work would not be possible without them. While we strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all, we recognize that there may be times when a volunteer's service with us comes to an end.

## **When a Volunteer Chooses to Step Away**

We understand that circumstances change and volunteers may need to take a break or move on. If you decide to step away from your role, we simply ask that you let your supervisor or the Community Engagement Manager know. This allows us to adjust schedules and express our appreciation properly. Volunteers who leave on good terms are typically welcome to return in the future when the timing feels right.

## **When Habitat Initiates the Separation**

On rare occasions, we may need to end a volunteer's involvement with the organization. This step is never taken lightly and is typically considered only after other options—such as conversation, clarification, or coaching—have been explored.

Examples of situations that may lead to dismissal include:

- Repeated no-shows or lack of communication
- Disrespectful or inappropriate behavior toward staff, fellow volunteers, or community members
- Violation of Habitat's policies, safety procedures, or code of conduct
- Actions that contradict the values of our mission

When appropriate, we aim to address concerns through open dialogue. However, if a volunteer's behavior poses a risk to the safety, well-being, or harmony of our team or community, dismissal may be immediate and final. In such cases, the volunteer may not be eligible to return in the future.

## **Moving Forward Respectfully**

Whether initiated by the volunteer or by Habitat, parting ways is handled with discretion and care. We recognize the value of every person who walks through our doors, and we are committed to treating everyone with fairness and dignity. In some cases, we may offer the opportunity for a closing conversation or feedback session to help us improve the volunteer experience for others.



# How to Get Involved

Getting involved with Bennington County Habitat for Humanity is simple and convenient. Here's how you can sign up and get started:

- **Sign Up for Shifts**

Use our online scheduling platform, **VolunteerUP**, to sign up for volunteer shifts. Through VolunteerUP, you can also:

- Watch essential **safety videos**
- Complete **required safety and liability waivers**

- **Need Assistance?**

If you have any questions or need help getting started, feel free to reach out:

- **Email:** [volunteer@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org](mailto:volunteer@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org)
- **Phone:** (802) 367-1000

We're excited to have you join us and look forward to seeing you make a difference in the community!

## Bringing a Friend

Volunteering is always more rewarding when you can share the experience! We welcome volunteers to bring friends, family, or colleagues to join in the work. It's a great way to introduce others to Habitat's mission and make a bigger impact, together.

### How It Works

- **Sign Up**

If you'd like to bring a friend, please have them sign up through our **VolunteerUP** platform. They'll need to complete all necessary waivers and safety videos before they can begin their shift.

- **Safety First**

All participants must abide by our safety policies and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the tasks at hand.

- **Group/Team Days**

If you're planning to bring a group, please contact the **Community Engagement Manager** in advance so we can ensure we have the proper resources and assignments ready.

Volunteering with a friend is a wonderful way to help us build stronger communities while spending time together. We're grateful for every new volunteer who comes through our doors!

# Construction Volunteers

**Department:** Construction

**Reports to:** Construction Manager and/or Construction Supervisor

## Goals and Impact of the Volunteer Position

- Habitat for Humanity partners with prospective homebuyers to provide a decent place to live through the construction of new (and sometimes rehabilitated) homes. Habitat homebuyers help build their own home alongside staff members and volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage
  - Decent, affordable housing provides homeowners with a place to grow, and help alleviate instability, stress and fear. It also encourages self-reliance and confidence. Studies have found that strong, stable households are foundational to child development and growth, health and safety, financial savings, and educational opportunities. Surveys of Habitat homeowners and their families show better financial health, more confidence in meeting their family's needs, and even improved grades for their children
- Habitat also partners with existing homeowners to provide home repair and revitalization services. These services help ensure that homeowners and their families have safe and well-maintained homes, thus preserving the inventory of affordable housing and improving safety and security.
  - Habitat home repairs often help older adults and individuals with mobility challenges remain safely in their home with dignity and independence
  - Habitat home repairs help existing homeowners primarily with safety and accessibility concerns. These are primarily ramp projects, but we often see entryways, windows, stairs, railings, etc.
- Each year, volunteers help build and repair up to 10 homes in our community, benefiting more than 25 individuals on top of our very active new construction program

## Location

Volunteer locations vary based on current project addresses. Specific service locations will be available before your register for your volunteer time. You will also receive the volunteer service address in your confirmation email. You can expect to volunteer anywhere in Bennington County, usually Bennington or Manchester.

## What to Expect in Your Service Environment

- At a Habitat construction site, you will help build or repair homes alongside staff members, future homeowners, and other volunteers
- The volunteer location is an active construction site. All volunteer code of conduct and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure a positive experience for everyone. Volunteers should be prepared to perform construction-related tasks, based on training received on site as part of the larger team. At times, you may work independently on projects
- Most construction tasks take place outdoors; exposure to weather elements should be anticipated
- Water is provided. Bringing a refillable water bottle is recommended
- Restroom facilities are provided. Please bear in mind that these are portable facilities
- No construction experience or skills are necessary for this volunteer position; Habitat staff members and lead volunteers will provide all necessary training and education

## **Tasks and Responsibilities**

Tasks and responsibilities vary based on the construction schedule and repairs. When possible, we aim to inform volunteers what the scheduled tasks are each week. Please be aware that these expected tasks may change before you arrive based on the nature of construction scheduling and potential weather. Potential tasks include:

- Site preparations
- Foundation work
- Framing, raising, and siding walls
- Window and door installation
- Insulation installation and air-sealing
- Drywall installation
- Exterior or interior painting
- Landscaping
- Finish Work (AKA Punch-Out)
- Site cleanup and maintenance, as necessary
- And more

Other projects may be available based on your individual skills and experience.

Construction projects may require the use of the following tools provided by Habitat:

- Hammers
- Tape measures
- Utility knives
- Siding snips and shears
- Other tools based on your training or comfort level and as needed to complete the project tasks

## **Skills and Qualifications for Construction Site Volunteers**

- Volunteers must be 18 or older to participate. If the volunteer is 16 or 17 years old, the available tasks are limited and must be discussed with Habitat staff before the volunteer shift
- Support of and belief in Habitat's mission, vision and values
- Openness to learning new things
- Ability to work as part of a team, and to follow safety guidelines / project directions.
- Willingness to embrace our community partners and neighbors as you build community with us
- Ability to be mindful of your environment and use sound judgment

# ReStore Volunteers

**Department:** Habitat for Humanity ReStore

**Reports to:** ReStore Manager

## Goals and Impact of the Volunteer Position

- A Habitat for Humanity ReStore is any store or venture involved in the sale of goods or merchandise and operated by or on behalf of a Habitat for Humanity affiliate. Our local Habitat ReStore accepts donations and sells new and gently used, diverse, high quality merchandise, including furniture, some appliances, homegoods, building materials, and more, while diverting reusable household items and building materials from area landfills. Sales of donated items help Habitat partner with qualified local homeowners to build, rehabilitate and repair safe and affordable homes in our community, helping people achieve strength, stability and self-reliance to build a better future while creating strong neighborhoods
- Volunteers are at the heart of the Habitat ReStore and bring new skills and capacity to provide discounted building materials and home goods to the community. The funds raised by our ReStore help build up to four homes and numerous home repairs each year in our community
- Habitat ReStore volunteers serve as representatives of Habitat's mission, vision and values and build community with all those who enter the ReStore. Each year, volunteers help engage over 9,000 customers and donors in our ReStore

## Location

51 Memorial Ave, Manchester Center VT 05255

## What to Expect in Your Service Environment

- At the Habitat ReStore, you will build community while interacting with customers, donors, Habitat staff members, homeowners, and volunteers
- The Habitat ReStore is a retail environment with constantly changing inventory and is an indoor, climate-controlled environment. Most tasks will be completed inside
  - That being said, there are occasional outdoor tasks such as unloading the box truck, and cleaning larger items
- Volunteers should be prepared to perform tasks as part of the larger team, but mostly, you will work on daily projects in small groups or even independently
- Water is provided. Bringing a refillable water bottle is recommended

## Tasks and Responsibilities

Tasks and responsibilities may vary based on available projects during your scheduled volunteer shift and on your interests. Potential tasks include:

- Receiving donations
- Stocking store shelves & sorting materials (hardware, tile, tools, etc.)
- Merchandising (building and creating displays for donated products)
- Cleaning/Prepping/Dusting/Pricing donations & displayed store merchandise
- Assisting with sales, as well as learning and operating a cash register
- Basic maintenance (sweeping, cleaning and organizing aisles)
- Greeting customers
- Loading and unloading merchandise
- Testing electrical or other donated products (recliners, tools, etc.)
- Cleaning donations to prepare for sales floor

Other projects may be available based on individual skills and experience.

## Skills and Qualifications for ReStore Volunteers

- Volunteers must be 14 or older to participate. Volunteers who are 14 or 15 years old must have a chaperone present during their shift. If the volunteer is between the ages of 14 and 17, the available tasks are limited and must be discussed with Habitat ReStore staff before the volunteer's shift
- Support of and commitment to Habitat's mission, vision, and values
- Openness to learning new things, and flexibility in a dynamic retail environment
- Ability to work as part of a team, and to follow safety guidelines / project directions
- Willingness to embrace our community partners and neighbors as you build community with us
- Ability to be mindful of your environment and use sound judgment

# Donation Pick-Up Volunteers

In addition to operating the retail store itself, we also collect donations from generous donors all across the county. Generally these pick-ups are on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Volunteers who sign up for these shifts can expect to do the following:

- Greet donors
- Collect donations
- Load and unload a moving truck
  - Sometimes the items can be quite large and heavy, such as couches, hutches, etc. The ability to lift a moderate to large amount of weight is necessary
- Drive our box truck
  - A special license (CDL) is not required, however only pre-approved volunteers may operate our vehicle(s)
- Thank donors for their items
- Bring broken or damaged items to the transfer station
- Any other tasks as delegated by the ReStore Manager



Bennington County  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

## Important Contact Information

Tye Poquette, Community Engagement Manager

Office: (802) 367-1000 Cell: (585) 743-7144

[Volunteer@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org](mailto:Volunteer@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org)

Chris Sherman, Construction Supervisor

Cell: (802) 430-2999

[Chris@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org](mailto:Chris@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org)

Tiffany Chestler, ReStore Manager

ReStore: (802) 362-0964

[ReStore@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org](mailto:ReStore@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org)

Cindy Luce, Executive Director

[Cindy@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org](mailto:Cindy@BenningtonCountyHabitat.org)

### **Bennington County Habitat Office:**

4732 Main St. Unit D

Manchester Center, VT 05255

(802) 367-1000

### **Bennington County Habitat ReStore:**

51 Memorial Ave

Manchester Center, VT 05255

(802) 362-0964

### **Mailing Address:**

PO Box 1159

Manchester, VT 05254

### **VolunteerUP Login**

[volunteerup.com/Login.asp?w=i&o=347](http://volunteerup.com/Login.asp?w=i&o=347)

**[BenningtonCountyHabitat.org/Volunteer](http://BenningtonCountyHabitat.org/Volunteer)**