



2023-2024

Volunteer Handbook & Policy Manual



Ulster County
Habitat
for Humanity®

Revised September 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Executive Director	page 3
Habitat for Humanity International	page 3
Ulster County Habitat for Humanity	page 4
Location, Hours, & Contact Info	page 4
Volunteer Opportunities	page 5
Parking	page 7
Volunteer Policies and Procedures	page 7
Application Process	page 7
Liability Waiver	page 7
Sex Offender Screening Procedures	page 7
Reporting and Recording Hours	page 8
Dress for Safety	page 8
Safety Procedures	page 8
Accident Procedures	page 9
Inclement Weather Policy	page 9
Rest and Lunch Periods	page 9
Media	page 9
Retail Purchasing Procedures	page 10
Volunteer Code of Conduct	page 10
Staff Right of Refusal	page 11
Volunteer Grievance Policy	page 11
Confidentiality and Privacy	page 11
Volunteer Recognition	page 11

Welcome!

First and most importantly, thank you for volunteering with Ulster County Habitat for Humanity! The staff and Board of Directors welcome you to our team of talented volunteers. We are so pleased you've chosen to join us in our mission to provide families in Ulster County the strength, stability, and independence they need to build a better life for themselves and for their families.

Ulster Habitat relies on volunteers in great variety of ways to help families realize their dream of owning their own home. Whether you are working on one of the construction sites, volunteering in our ReStore, or helping at a special event you are contributing to our goal of a county where everyone has a safe and affordable place to live.

This manual will provide information on the policies and procedures of Ulster Habitat. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact our volunteer coordinator at (845)340-0907 x 105 or by email volunteers@ulsterhabitat.org.

I welcome you to our Habitat family and wish you a wonderful volunteer experience. Thank you for sharing your time and talents.

Christine Brady LaValle
Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) was founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller. Today, Habitat for Humanity is a true leader in addressing the issues of poverty housing worldwide. HFHI's mission is a world where everyone has a safe place to live. HFHI partners with people in your community, and all over the world, to help them build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners purchase their home with an affordable mortgage and work alongside volunteers to build their own home and other Habitat homes.

Non-proselytizing policy

Habitat for Humanity and its affiliate organizations will not proselytize. Nor will Habitat work with entities or individuals who insist on proselytizing as part of their work with Habitat. This means that Habitat will not help on the expressed or implied condition that people must adhere to or convert to a particular faith or listen and respond to messaging designed to induce conversion to a particular faith.

Ulster County Habitat for Humanity

Established in Ulster County in 1996, Ulster County Habitat for Humanity (Ulster Habitat) is a not-for-profit organization that builds safe and affordable housing with the help of volunteer labor, donated funds, time, and material. Ulster Habitat is an affiliate in good standing of HFHI and is governed by a local board of directors. Ulster Habitat provides a hand up, not a hand-out. Each home is sold to a qualified homeowner partner who purchases their home with an affordable mortgage. These families contribute “sweat equity” hours by helping on the construction of Habitat homes alongside staff and volunteers.

In 2013, the affiliate took another significant step and opened a ReStore at 406 Route 28, Kingston, New York, 12401.

Location, Hours, and Contact Information

Ulster Habitat Office

406 Route 28 (physical address)
Kingston, NY 12401

P.O. Box 2554 (mailing address)
Kingston, NY 12402

(845)340-0907

Monday – Friday

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Ulster ReStore

406 Route 28 (physical address)
Kingston, NY 12401

P.O. Box 2554 (mailing address)
Kingston, NY 12402

(845) 853-7499

Wednesday – Saturday

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

The Executive Director, Affiliate Staff, Volunteer Coordinator, Family Services Coordinator, and Project Manager can be contacted during business hours at (845)340-0907.

The ReStore Manager and ReStore Staff can be reached at (845)853-7499 Tuesday through Saturday between 10 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Ulster Habitat for Humanity follows fair housing laws and does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, ancestry, military status, disability, or national origin.

Volunteer Opportunities

Construction

Volunteers assist with all stages of home construction, including framing, hanging drywall, painting, and landscaping. No construction experience or skills are required. Build schedules and shift assignments are determined by the project manager. Confirmation and work schedules will be coordinated through the volunteer office. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older for most build site tasks. Minors between the ages of 16 and 18 may participate in specific projects like painting, landscaping, and general clean up with parental permission, appropriate supervision, and approval from the project manager. An online safety course is required before any volunteer can assist on the build site.



ReStore

The ReStore sells mainly donated materials to help raise revenue to support Habitat's mission of affordable housing. Volunteers participate in 3-to-4-hour shifts Tuesday through Saturday or select short term projects under the direction of the restore manager. Assignments include working the Prep Room (evaluating, cleaning, repairing, and pricing donations); the Sales Floor (greeting and assisting customers, pricing donations, organizing merchandise displays or wrapping purchases; Donations & Warehouse (maintaining an

organized flow of merchandise from the donation intake area to the sales floor along with warehouse storage maintenance and assisting customers with loading and unloading).



Special Events

At various times during the year, volunteers help gather and package donated items, and assist with duties at fundraisers and other HFH events.



Parking

ReStore Parking : Volunteer parking is provided on the lower level of the building on Jockey Hill Road. There is a limited number of street level parking on Route 28 for volunteers. Street-level handicap parking is available.

Build Parking: The project manager will provide details regarding parking at each specific project location.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Application Process:

To participate in our Volunteer Program, register online at <https://ulsterhabitat.org/volunteer-registration/>

1. Read the Volunteer Handbook.
2. Print, read and sign the [Standard Waiver](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) forms. *Please bring your signed forms to your orientation.*
3. Complete the appropriate online safety course.
 - ReStore Volunteers: complete “ReStore Safety & Loss Control for Volunteers.”
 - Build Volunteers: complete “Volunteering on A Habitat for Humanity Job Site” (you must be at least 18 years of age to build).
 - The link to the safety courses can be found at <https://ulsterhabitat.org/volunteer-registration/>.
4. Once the safety course is complete, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@ulsterhabitat.org or call directly at 845-340-00907 x 105, to schedule your orientation.

Liability Waiver

Volunteers must sign a Release and Waiver of Liability before beginning any volunteer activity. Minors must also submit a Release and Waiver of Liability signed by a parent/legal guardian. These are good for one calendar year.

Sex Offender Screening Procedures

Ulster Habitat screens all potential homeowners, volunteers, and staff for past and or current involvement in illegal sexual conduct, as required by Habitat for Humanity International.

Persons found to be listed on any of the referenced Sexual Offender Data Bases or charged with a current/pending sexually related crime will be ineligible to participate with Ulster Habitat pending additional investigation of circumstances. All persons with a Lifetime registration requirement are ineligible to participate.

Reporting and Recording Hours

All volunteers must sign in at the beginning of their shift and sign out at the end of the shift. This allows the volunteer coordinator to keep track of total volunteer hours and individual involvement.

At the beginning of a shift, on the build site, volunteers report to the project manager to sign in, participate in the daily safety talk, and receive instructions related to the tasks for the day.

Dress for Safety

- Safety is a priority at all Habitat for Humanity job sites. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a requirement and will be provided as necessary.
- On the build site, comfortable and sturdy work shoes are required. Sandals and open toed shoes are prohibited. Long pants and sleeves may be required along with appropriate weather-related outerwear.
- Work gloves and eye protective wear will be available on site, but individuals may bring their own.

Safety Procedures

Safety is a primary responsibility of all Habitat staff and volunteers. Accidents can be avoided. Identifying and correcting potential safety issues is a shared responsibility. Hazards should be promptly reported to the ReStore Manager, Project Manager or Executive Director.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses, gloves, or masks should be used as indicated by the tasks or directed by the project manager, ReStore Manager, or Executive Director.
- Clothing should be appropriate to the task. Flip flops, sandals or any open-toed footwear, high heels, flowing scarves, short shorts, tank tops, and clothing with inappropriate pictures or messages are not allowed.
- No volunteer may use heavy machinery, power equipment, or drive Ulster Habitat vehicles without permission, proper training, and approved PPE.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are in the ReStore and must be reviewed before using any products for cleaning or restoration.

Each volunteer at a Habitat for Humanity build site or in the ReStore should:

- Review safety materials provided by the affiliate.
- Participate in all safety training offered by the affiliate, including any available online safety training modules.
- 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.
- Help maintain a safe and clean work area.

Volunteers are responsible for recognizing safety alarms; participating in safety drills; and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and other emergency equipment and exits.

Accident Procedure – In the event of an accident

- Stabilize the situation and inform management immediately.
- DO NOT move an injured person. Do not suggest or recommend treatment.
- A first aid kit is available in the Construction trailer, in the ReStore at the cashier's desk, in the Break and Prep Rooms, and in the Affiliate Office kitchen.
- An Incident/Accident Report must be completed by Ulster management staff for any accident that occurs on Ulster Habitat property.
- Immediately report incidents to the Executive Director, ReStore or Project Manager. Staff will handle the situation. Do not offer, promise, or discuss responsibility on behalf of the Affiliate, ReStore, or Build project.

Inclement Weather Policy:

In the event of inclement weather, such as a significant snow event, ice or flooding, a delayed opening or early closing may be necessary. Every effort will be made to contact affected volunteers. A notice may be posted on the Ulster Habitat webpage (www.ulsterhabitat.org), Facebook or Instagram. A voice message may be placed on the Affiliate and ReStore phone. Volunteers should contact the Volunteer Coordinator to receive the most up-to-date information.

It is the intent of the Affiliate that all volunteers use their best judgment to determine when it is safe for them to travel to or from the Habitat workplace.

Rest and Lunch Periods:

Breaks throughout the day are encouraged as workflow allows. In addition to breaks, any volunteer working 5 hours, or more is required to take a 30-minute lunch.

In the ReStore, the kitchen/breakroom is available to volunteers for lunch or snack breaks, as needed. Please be sensitive to the needs of the customers and avoid having everyone leave the sales floor at the same time. To reduce the risk of insects, rodents, and/or damage to donated merchandise, no food is allowed in areas of the building other than the Break Room. Please be sure to clean up after yourself.

On the build site, individuals and groups are encouraged to plan and bring their own lunch. There will be a designated lunch break in the middle of the workday. All breaks must be approved and cleared by the project manager. Ulster Habitat always provides water for volunteers on the construction site.

Media:

Managing the affiliate's social media outlets is one of the roles of the volunteer coordinator. This involves:

- Updates and photos of current UCHFH projects
- Informing the community about programs we offer
- Marketing and volunteer recruitment materials

- Giving recognition to volunteers and sponsors
- Keeping the community updated about affiliate events

Part of the volunteer coordinator role involves taking photos and videos of volunteers at the ReStore and on build sites. Care will be taken to ensure that volunteers are asked if they are comfortable with using their photo for social media or marketing purposes.

There may also be situations where the partner family does not want their photo or names used for their privacy and protection. Always respect these situations and make sure that the volunteers who are working alongside the partner family respect their privacy as well.

Retail Purchasing Procedure:

Donated items are to be cleaned, evaluated, and priced before they are available for sale. To avoid public perception that workers are gleaning all the 'good' stuff, **no item is available for sale to friends, volunteers, or staff until it has been placed on the sales floor for 24 hours!**

Volunteers are welcome to purchase items from the sales floors at the end of a shift or any time they are not on shift. **Please do not ask the cashier to hold items in the area behind the cash register.** Volunteers who have logged 50 or more hours within the prior six-month period will receive a 20% discount card for all ReStore purchases.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Ulster Habitat affirms that every participant in a Habitat activity is entitled to be treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect. Ulster Habitat does not condone discrimination based on age, physical or intellectual disability, race, greed, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, or national origin.

Volunteers should be aware that although their efforts are voluntary and greatly appreciated, their adherence to this Code of Conduct is for their own safety, for the successful operation of the affiliate, and is a requirement for volunteering.

All volunteers are expected to refrain from:

- Any behavior that may be considered rude, profane, vulgar, demeaning, lewd, perverse, disrespectful, or otherwise unprofessional
- Wearing any clothing that depicts or mentions violence, nudity, sexual acts, profanity, lewd conduct or illegal, immoral, or otherwise unethical behaviors.
- Unwelcome flirtation or uninvited physical contact
- Use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances which impair the ability to fulfill assigned responsibilities
- Possession of weapons of any kind
- Stealing or misappropriation of Ulster Habitat funds, property, or assets
- Use of any tobacco products (including vaping) on any Habitat property
- Leaving the premises without first notifying appropriate staff

Staff Right of Refusal

Ulster Habitat staff has the right to refuse to work with any volunteer they believe presents a danger to others or who they believe may jeopardize any aspect of the mission of the affiliate. All effort will be made to find a suitable task for each volunteer, but Ulster Habitat is aware that certain situations call for a volunteer's immediate dismissal. Ulster Habitat staff is ultimately responsible for the safe and proper operation of the affiliate and will use good judgment, discretion, and courtesy when handling all volunteer matters.

Volunteer Grievance Policy

We at Ulster Habitat take the grievances of volunteers very seriously and want to ensure that all volunteers have a positive experience with us. Volunteers are encouraged to share grievances with the volunteer coordinator first. If the grievance is concerning the volunteer coordinator, then the volunteer should share their grievance with their immediate supervisor or manager.

Confidentiality and Privacy

The personal privacy of all Ulster Habitat volunteers is important to the affiliate. Volunteers should be made aware that volunteering with Ulster Habitat requires a certain waiver of privacy as outlined in their signed Waiver and Release of Liability agreement. Nevertheless, all personal information regarding volunteers will be retained in the manner specified in the Ulster Habitat Document Retention Policy.

All volunteers are expected to treat Ulster Habitat information with the strictest confidence. Any financial data, partner family information and all data that may be considered propriety or private to Ulster Habitat or its stakeholders should not be shared with other non-authorized parties.

Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers are integral to Ulster Habitat's ability to achieve its mission. Therefore, we will take every opportunity to recognize and appreciate our volunteers and their contributions. This includes:

- 20% discount at the ReStore dependent on volunteer hours (50 hours/6 months)
- Written and verbal recognition
- Acknowledgment at home dedications
- Events held in honor of volunteers i.e., Volunteer Appreciate Week Events, Annual Volunteer Appreciation Summer Picnic, etc.

