



2017

Volunteer Manual



Prepared by:
Sussex County Habitat for Humanity
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I. Welcome!



Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Sussex County Habitat for Humanity. We are delighted that you have taken this step to learn more about how you can support us as we partner with people from all walks of life to provide families in need with simple, decent, and affordable housing.

The ultimate purpose of Habitat for Humanity is to make poverty housing become socially, politically, and religiously unacceptable in today's world. It is our hope that you will join us in this spirit of partnership and that your efforts with Sussex County Habitat will prove enjoyable and rewarding. We are a volunteer-driven organization that relies on volunteers like you to help families realize the dream of homeownership. From working on the construction sites and helping in the ReStores, to assisting with special events and serving on committees or the Board of Directors, to helping in the office and supporting fundraising efforts—volunteers impact every facet of our organization.

This manual will provide information on policies and practices of Sussex County Habitat for Humanity. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this manual, as it will answer many questions concerning our organization and outline how you can become involved.

In order to retain necessary flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures, Sussex County Habitat reserves the right to amend any of the policies and/or benefits described in this manual.

Welcome to the Sussex County Habitat for Humanity family. We look forward to working in partnership with you to build homes, communities, and hope!

Kevin Gilmore
Executive Director

II. Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI's vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live and its mission is to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of partner families and volunteers.

Founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller, HFHI has built/repared more than 800,000 houses worldwide, providing more than 4 million people with safe, decent, and affordable shelter. HFHI, has headquarters in Americus and Atlanta, Georgia, and now has 1,500 local affiliates in the United States and more than 70 national organizations around the world.

III. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity

Established in 1991, Sussex County Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization that builds simple, decent, and affordable homes with the help of volunteer labor and donated funds, time and materials. Sussex County Habitat is an affiliate in good standing of HFHI and is governed by a local board of directors. Habitat provides a hand-up, not a hand-out. Each home is sold with an affordable, not-for-profit mortgage to local families who otherwise might be forced to live in substandard housing. These families contribute at least 200 hours of "sweat equity" by helping in the construction of their own homes and the homes of other partner families alongside Habitat staff and volunteers.

Living in a home with an affordable mortgage allows lower income families the resources to provide for themselves. The transition from renter to homeowner transforms the lives of families who helped to build their own homes, and establishes new and hopeful expectations for the children who grow up in a stable environment.

The Family Services committee and Board of Directors choose prospective home buyers based on their level of need, willingness to become partners in the program, and ability to repay an affordable mortgage. Every Habitat for Humanity affiliate follows a nondiscrimination policy for family selection, meaning gender, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other protected status are not factors in choosing families that purchase Habitat homes. To ensure success, Sussex County Habitat for Humanity works closely with partner families to provide training in household budgeting, home ownership, and home maintenance.

Our affiliate has built over 100 homes in Sussex County, housing more than 400 adults and children.

IV. Locations and Hours

A. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity Administrative Office

206 Academy Street
P.O. Box 759
Georgetown, DE 19947

Office hours:

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

B. Georgetown ReStore

107 Depot Street
Georgetown, DE 19947

Georgetown ReStore hours:

Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 5pm
Saturday, 8am – 3pm

C. Lewes ReStore

18501 Stamper Drive
Lewes, DE 19958

Lewes ReStore hours:

Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 5pm
Saturday, 8am – 3pm

V. Contact Information

A. Main affiliate office: (302) 855-1153

i. Executive Director

Kevin Gilmore
(302) 855-1153 x 201
kevin@sussexcountyhabitat.org

ii. Resource Development Director

Jay Gundy
(302) 855-1153 x 210
jay@sussexcountyhabitat.org

iii. Family Services Manager

Heather Barony
(302) 855-1153 x 204
heather@sussexcountyhabitat.org

iv. Manager of Finance and Administration

Susan Webb
(302) 855-1153 x 203

susan@sussexcountyhabitat.org

v. **Programs Manager**

Nancy Greene

(302) 855-1153 x 205

nancy@sussexcountyhabitat.org

a) **Volunteer Programs Coordinator:**

Barbara Ward

(302) 855-1153 x 211

barbara@sussexcountyhabitat.org

vi. **Construction Manager**

Jeff Niethammer

(302) 855-1153 x 202

jeff@sussexcountyhabitat.org

a) **Site Supervisors**

i. Shannon Bull

shannon@sussexcountyhabitat.org

ii. Ed Gilpin

ed@sussexcountyhabitat.org

iii. Wayne Smith

i. wayne@sussexcountyhabitat.org

iv. Mike Somers

mike@sussexcountyhabitat.org

B. Restore

1. **Manager**

Mark Quigley

(302) 855-1156 x 203

mark@sussexcountyhabitat.org

2. **Assistant Manager**

Jaime McNatt

(302) 855-1156 x 202

jaime@sussexcountyhabitat.org

C. Social Media Pages

1. **Website:** www.sussexcountyhabitat.org

2. **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/sussexcountyhabitatforhumanity

3. **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/sussexcountyhfh>

4. **Instagram:** <http://instagram.com/sussexcountyhabitat>

VI. Volunteer Opportunities

A. Construction

Construction is the most popular volunteer opportunity. Volunteers assist with all stages of home construction. No construction experience or skills are required. Volunteers are trained and led by Sussex County Habitat construction staff and AmeriCorps service members.

When: Each Wednesday through Saturday; 8:45am-3:00pm

Location: Varies based on construction schedule

To participate in active construction, volunteers must be at least 16 years of age. Youth aged 16 and under may volunteer with adult-chaperoned youth groups to assist with landscape, painting, and other similar non-construction projects.



B. ReStores

The Sussex County Habitat ReStores sell donated materials to raise revenue to support the mission of affordable housing while keeping more than one million pounds of usable material out of local landfills. ReStore volunteer tasks include cleaning the stores, donation pick-up and drop-off, loading customer purchases, preparing donations for display, pricing, stocking shelves, and home demo and pre-demo projects.

ReStore locations:

Georgetown: 107 Depot Street

Lewes: 18501 Stamper Drive

Tuesday – Friday 10am-5pm; Saturday 8am-3pm



C. Special Events

Volunteers are needed throughout the year to assist with special events and fundraisers. Locations and times vary.



D. Office Support

Volunteers provide administrative and front desk support in our Affiliate office.

When: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

Location: 206 Academy Street, Georgetown

E. Committees

Volunteers with relevant experience may serve on Sussex County Habitat for Humanity committees, including:

1. Family Services Committee

Committee members participate in the process of selecting candidates for homeownership, and serve as mentors for partner families as they prepare for homeownership.

2. Land Acquisition Committee

Committee members seek properties in strategically designated areas for homeownership, and follow up with inquiries about property donations.

3. Resource Development Committee

This committee prospects and cultivates personal relationships in the community with the goal of inviting donor support for the work of Sussex County Habitat for Humanity. Within this committee is a special events participation component.

4. Finance Committee

Committee members oversee and monitor Sussex County Habitat's financial position, and work to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the affiliate.

If you are interested in serving on a committee, please send a letter citing your relevant experience and background to Barbara Ward, Volunteer Programs Coordinator at barbara@sussexcountyhabitat.org or by mail to P.O. Box 759, Georgetown DE 19947

VII. Volunteer Procedures and Policies

A. Volunteer Eligibility

In keeping with federal OSHA safety standards, construction volunteers under the age of 16 may not work on an active build site. Youth volunteers can work on landscaping, painting and other projects as part of adult-chaperoned volunteer groups. Volunteers aged 16 and 17 may work on active build sites, but **may not** use power tools. All volunteers under the age of 18 must have a Liability Release and Wavier signed by a parent or legal guardian.

B. Volunteer Registration Process

1. Online registration

Volunteers are required to register online 48 hours before volunteering. Visit www.sussexcountyhabitat.org and click on the home page **Volunteer** link to access and complete the ***Individual Volunteer Registration***.

PLEASE NOTE: You must hit the "Save" button at the bottom of the registration page in order for the registration to process.

Look for both the on-screen and email confirmation before proceeding.



2. Online Safety Training

View the safety training video “*Volunteering on a Habitat for Humanity Job Site*” and complete the brief quiz at the end. (You will need 20 minutes for this step.)

3. Additional Steps for Construction Volunteers

After completing the safety training, go to the website’s **Calendar** tab to view volunteer opportunities and open build sites. Click “Sign Up Now” on the date and location you wish to serve. **PLEASE NOTE:** You must register as a volunteer and complete the safety training before signing up to build.

4. Additional Steps for Volunteer Groups

To schedule a group build, contact the Volunteer Programs Coordinator barbara@sussexcountyhabitat.org with information about group size, desired date(s), and age range of participants. Please allow plenty of lead-time as the calendar can fill quickly.

C. Dress Code

The following guidelines are to help ensure your health and safety on the construction site and assist you in projecting an appropriate appearance:

1. Volunteers should wear weather-suitable apparel that is appropriate for their specific work area. Jeans and t-shirts are acceptable at construction sites and the ReStores.
2. Construction volunteers may wear shorts, but they must be a modest length. ***Closed-toe, hard-soled, sturdy shoes are mandatory!*** No jewelry, tank tops, or overly loose clothing is permitted.
3. ReStore volunteers must wear long pants—no sweatpants, leggings, or athletic gear.
4. Work gloves are recommended for construction sites and ReStore demo teams. Additionally, volunteers must wear affiliate-provided personal protective equipment, as required.
5. Any clothing with disturbing messages or provocative in nature, which could be viewed by others as offensive or suggestive, is prohibited.



D. Build Day Schedule

8:45 am	Volunteers arrive on site
9:00 am	Opening circle
Noon	Lunch break (pack your own)
2:30 pm	Clean up
3:00 pm	Closing circle

E. Safety Procedures

At Sussex County Habitat for Humanity, the safety of volunteers, team members, and partners is the highest priority. Volunteers must complete Lockton's free online safety course: <http://hfhaffiliateinsurance.com/volunteers/>

1. Volunteers should immediately report unsafe working conditions or health hazards to the construction supervisor.
2. In case of emergency (gas leak, fire, etc.), it is mandatory to evacuate the building/site immediately.
3. Injuries should be reported immediately to the site supervisor. An incident report form must be completed.
4. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity is not responsible for theft or damage of any kind related to motorized vehicles, bikes, trailer or similar items or contents.

F. Social Media Guidelines

To help us spread the word about Habitat's important mission and your critical role in it, we employ the following Social Media Guidelines. Please follow these simple Social Media DO's and DON'Ts:

1. Please Do:

- a. E-mail all pictures taken by you/your group during your day(s) of service to your Site Volunteer Coordinator.
- b. Like and share our social media posts and tag us in yours.
- c. Check out the photo galleries on our website.

2. Please Do Not:

- a. Share pictures or video directly on social media without prior review and approval of Sussex County Habitat for Humanity.
- b. Take pictures of someone without their knowledge/permission.
- c. Tag someone on social media without their knowledge/permission.
- d. Take pictures on-site whenever it is unsafe to do so.



VIII. Other Service Opportunities

A. Court-Ordered Community Service

Individuals interested in serving court-ordered community service must register with the Volunteer Programs Coordinator (barbara@sussexcountyhabitat.org) before beginning work. The volunteer must register at the affiliate office and provide their court paperwork and a valid photo identification. Sussex County Habitat reserves the right to refuse court-ordered community service opportunities for any charges that conflict with the organization's mission and vision.

Volunteers track their hours on sheets issued by the court. Habitat staff will sign off on volunteer hours at the end of each shift. *Hours not verified by staff or lost tracking sheets will result in the volunteer not getting credit for those hours.* Upon completion of their required hours, the volunteer must submit their time sheets to the Volunteer Programs Coordinator who will provide a letter verifying the completion of required hours. Requests for letters should be made at least three days in advance.

B. Department of Health and Social Services

Sussex County Habitat welcomes individuals from DHSS. Volunteers should contact the Volunteer Programs Coordinator and bring all referral paperwork to the office, along with a valid form of identification. The Volunteer Programs Coordinator will determine whether the volunteer can be accommodated and, if so, coordinate the volunteer's work plan. Volunteers can have required timesheets signed by the Program Manager or Volunteer Programs Coordinator, print a summary of hours from the Sussex Habitat website, or request a letter stating the summary of hours served. Volunteers that no-show for volunteer assignments may be asked not to return.

IX. Other Policies

A. Inclement Weather Policy

We typically build rain or shine, but if the weather forecast looks questionable, please call (302) 855-1153 any time after 7:00 am on the day of construction. The answering message will be updated if construction is cancelled for the day.

B. Rest and Lunch Periods

Breaks throughout the day are encouraged as workflow allows. In addition to breaks, volunteers working five or more hours are required to take a 30 minute lunch.

C. Media

All requests for information from representatives of any news media or publication should be referred to your direct supervisor.

D. Gifts & Gratuities

To ensure the integrity of Sussex County Habitat for Humanity and the unbiased actions and decision-making of Habitat volunteers, the acceptance of gifts and gratuities from customers, suppliers, partners, or anyone having a business relationship with Sussex County Habitat is strictly prohibited.

E. Gift Giving Policy Regarding Partner Families

Sometimes volunteers want to give gifts or money to partner families. This is prohibited as inconsistent with the principle of "giving a hand-up, not a hand-out." Giving individual gifts also sets a precedent and falsely raises expectations among families or individuals as to what future volunteers might provide. Volunteers are encouraged to consider financial contributions to Sussex County Habitat that can be used to assist families throughout Sussex County.



F. Harassment Policy

Sussex County Habitat for Humanity is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from discrimination and prohibited actions, and where team members, volunteers and partners at all levels are free to devote full attention and best efforts to the job. Harassment, either intentional or unintentional, has no place in the work environment. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity WILL NOT tolerate any form of harassment of or by a team member, client or volunteer based on race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other protected status. The term “harassment” includes, but is not limited to, offensive language, jokes or other verbal, graphic or physical conduct relating to a team member’s race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation which would make the reasonable person experiencing such harassment uncomfortable in the work environment, or which could interfere with the person’s job performance. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity’s prohibition against engaging in any form of harassment and protection from being the victim of harassment applies equally to team members, volunteers, clients, vendors, contractors and customers.

1. Reporting Instances of Harassment

Sussex County Habitat desires to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect. Therefore, you have the responsibility and opportunity to explain to your fellow volunteers and Sussex County Habitat staff members that you find a particular language or action offensive, or to report any such behavior that you may witness.

If you believe that you have been harassed by a volunteer, co-worker, supervisor, manager or other individual at the workplace (whether employed by Sussex County Habitat or not), or believe that your volunteer experience is being adversely affected by such conduct, you should immediately report such concerns, in writing to:

Barbara Ward, Volunteer Programs Coordinator
Phone: 302- 855- 1153 x 211
Email: barbara@sussexcountyhabitat.org

- 2.** In the event that the complaint is regarding the Volunteer Programs Coordinator, or if the individual is not comfortable bringing it to the Volunteer Programs Coordinator, please report to:

Kevin Gilmore, Executive Director
Phone: 302-855-1153 x 201
Email: kevin@sussexcountyhabitat.org

Complaints of harassment should be made in writing and be signed. A copy of your complaint will be signed by the person to whom the complaint is made.

X. Volunteer Expectations and Responsibilities

A. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity aims to encourage people to work together to achieve Habitat's mission by creating an environment that supports the diversity of people and their ideas. Sussex County Habitat is committed to supporting high standards of ethics in every aspect of its operation. Sussex County Habitat recognizes that people work best when they know what is expected of them and, in turn, expect volunteers to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all Sussex County Habitat employees and volunteers.

1. Volunteers are expected to fully support the mission of Sussex County Habitat for Humanity and embrace its core values.
2. Volunteers must abide by all Sussex County Habitat for Humanity volunteer guidelines.
3. Volunteer must remain respectful, courteous and professional at all times when interacting with staff, fellow volunteers and partner families.
4. Volunteers must register and complete a new liability waiver each year.
5. Volunteers must be on time for shifts. If you are going to be late or unable to volunteer for a shift, contact the point person or Volunteer Programs Coordinator.
6. Volunteers must follow the dress code for their volunteer assignment.
7. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Please keep your valuables safe.
8. Volunteers may not promote any commercial products, religious doctrines or beliefs, or political candidates/parties during their volunteer assignment.
9. If at any time you encounter a problem or have a question during your volunteer assignment please:
 - a) Notify the supervisor overseeing the project. They will take the necessary steps to correct the issue/problem.
 - b) If you still have further questions, please contact the Volunteer Programs Coordinator.
10. Volunteers needing a letter to document their hours, please allow 72 hours' notice. Letters can be obtained from the Volunteer Programs Coordinator.
11. Volunteers wishing to terminate their assignments at Habitat should notify their supervisor as soon as possible.



B. Sussex County Habitat for Humanity commits to the following:

1. To do the very best to make your volunteer experience productive and rewarding.
2. To provide adequate information, training, and assistance for each volunteer to be able to meet the responsibilities of their commitment.

3. To ensure diligent supervision to the volunteer.
4. To respect the skills, dignity and individual needs of the volunteer.
5. To be receptive to any comments from the volunteer regarding ways to better accomplish our respective tasks.
6. To treat the volunteer as an integral member of the Habitat team, jointly responsible for the completion of the Habitat mission while upholding our core values.

C. Termination/Exit

Any conduct that is not in keeping with the mission and core values of Sussex County Habitat or the above stated expectations and responsibilities may result in the volunteer being asked not to return.

D. Grievance Policy

While Sussex County Habitat desires that all volunteers receive fair and impartial treatment, we recognize that conflicts, misunderstandings, and problems arise from time to time. Problems or concerns may arise among volunteers or between volunteers and Sussex County Habitat staff. 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/concern that a problem/concern exists. Those involved should attempt to resolve the issue informally and independently.
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 resolve the issue satisfactorily after discussing it with the other party, the volunteer should then contact the project supervisor or the Volunteer Programs Coordinator.

XI. Volunteer Recognition

A. Volunteers are integral to Sussex County Habitat’s ability to achieve its mission. Sussex County Habitat will take every opportunity to recognize and appreciate its volunteers and their contributions. This includes:

1. Written and verbal recognition
2. Acknowledgment at home dedications
3. Events held in honor of volunteers



B. Subject to availability, volunteers will be offered opportunities to take part in trainings relevant to their activities with Sussex County Habitat. Trainings may include:

1. OSHA certification
2. First Aid/CPR/AED certification
3. Construction Site and ReStore Safety Orientations

The Volunteer's Bill of Rights & Responsibilities

The popular image of a volunteer is the selfless, giving, altruistic individual who is willing to take on any task that comes their way. While this is perhaps a noble idea, there are actually very real rights and responsibilities to volunteering. Here are some of our suggestions of rights and responsibilities for you to keep in mind, as well as discuss with your volunteer supervisor:

A Volunteer's Rights:

1. The right to feel safe

One of the benefits of volunteering is the decision to leave your comfort zone in order to experience new and challenging situations, environments, or roles. However, there is a big difference between feeling off-center or uncomfortable and feeling at risk or unsafe. As a volunteer, you have the right to be apprised of any potential risks, as well as have precautionary measures and safety procedures in place to ensure your physical and emotional well-being.

2. The right to information about your volunteer role or project

Whether it is questions about the volunteer application process, or the volunteer role or project itself (who will I be working with? how will my efforts make a difference?), you have the right to know the who, what, when, why, and how of your volunteer position.

3. The right to feel valued

Volunteering—whether for two hours or two years—is a significant commitment that you choose to make. In return, you have the right to feel that your time and contribution—however long you have volunteered and whatever your task—is valued. Similarly, you have the right to feel that an organization or volunteer effort is using your skills and talents well (keeping in mind that they may not always have the capacity to take on some or all of your ideas or proposed projects) and that the work you do has meaning and makes a difference.

4. The right to negotiate your volunteer role

Find yourself in a volunteer position that just is not working for you? You have the right to talk to your volunteer manager to discuss ways you might be able to shift your role or take on another project or position. And, if you still cannot find a good fit...

5. The right to leave

...you have the right to leave. This is not a decision that should be made hastily but, if after talking to and working with your volunteer manager, you still feel unhappy, unappreciated, or unsatisfied with your volunteer experience, you do have the right to do something, or go somewhere else.

A Volunteer's Responsibilities

1. The responsibility to communicate your needs

Are you feeling that your work is not meaningful or not what you thought you had envisioned? Are you just bored and ready for something else? Talk to your volunteer manager, providing specifics about your dissatisfaction and at least a few suggestions of ways to make it better. If you do not let them know that you are not getting what you hoped from the experience, they cannot work with you to improve things. Similarly, do not hesitate to let them know if you feel you need additional tools, training, or support. If they cannot provide it directly, they should at least be able to point you in the right direction.

2. The responsibility to follow through on your obligations

There is a pervasive myth that volunteers are unreliable. While of course this is not true across the board, there are plenty of flaky volunteers who reinforce such negative perceptions. Help improve the reputation of volunteers worldwide by doing what you say you'll do, whether it's honoring the volunteer role and agreed upon schedule, providing ample notice if you're unable to perform your tasks or responsibilities, saying no or stepping away from volunteering when necessary, or simply serving as a good representative of the organization in the community.

3. The responsibility to not promise what you cannot deliver

This is especially important to avoid if you are working with vulnerable populations. Remember, by not following through with your promise, you can potentially hurt the reputation of the organization and undermine the work.

4. The responsibility to honor the organization's investment in you

Organizations invest quite a bit in their volunteers via staff time, tools, training, and so on. This is why it is important to research your volunteer position first to determine if it is a good fit for you, and, once you are in the role, to always first try negotiating your volunteer role if you are unsatisfied, rather than just suddenly leaving.

5. The responsibility to take care of yourself

Last but most certainly not least, you have the responsibility to make sure that you aren't overextending yourself, burning out, or causing yourself physical, mental, or emotional harm by taking on roles that aren't a good fit or that you aren't prepared for. While some stress and burnout may be inevitable depending on the project, you can significantly limit it by seeking out support (talk to your volunteer supervisor and fellow volunteers), taking a break (either as you are volunteering or stepping away from volunteering altogether for a while), injecting some fun into your service portfolio (even if it's just a one day gig on the side), and having realistic expectations about what can be accomplished and when.