



Sumter

Habitat
for Humanity®

BUILDING **HOMES**.
BUILDING **HOPE**.
BUILDING **COMMUNITY**.

Together, we build
strength, stability,
self-reliance and hope.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Thank you for choosing to
build a better future.



EVERY HAND
MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

YOU are the
heart of Habitat.



VOLUNTEER



BUILD



EMPOWER



TRANSFORM

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Welcome to the Sumter Habitat for Humanity Team!

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to be part of the Sumter Habitat for Humanity family.

Whether you're joining us for a single afternoon, serving with your church or business, volunteering regularly in the ReStore, or picking up a hammer for the very first time, I want you to know how grateful we are that you're here. You have chosen to invest your time, talents, and heart into something much bigger than yourself. That decision will have a lasting impact.

At Sumter Habitat for Humanity, we believe that everyone deserves a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home. A home is more than four walls and a roof. It's where children do their homework at the kitchen table, where families gather to celebrate life's milestones, where neighbors become friends, and where hope takes root. When families have the stability of homeownership, they gain the opportunity to build brighter futures for themselves and generations to come.

That transformation is only possible because of volunteers like you.

You don't need construction experience to make a difference. You don't have to know how to swing a hammer, paint a wall, or operate power tools. You simply need a willing heart and a desire to serve. Whether you're organizing donations in the ReStore, greeting customers, helping at a fundraising event, building a wheelchair ramp, planting flowers, preparing a home for a new family, or framing walls on a construction site, every task matters. Every hour you give helps move a family one step closer to the stability, independence, and opportunity that come with having a place to call home.

As you volunteer with us, you'll discover that Habitat builds far more than houses. Together, we build confidence. We build relationships. We build stronger neighborhoods. We build hope. And along the way, you'll likely find that this experience changes you as much as it changes the families we serve.

We are committed to making your volunteer experience safe, meaningful, and rewarding. This handbook is designed to help you understand our mission, prepare for your volunteer experience, and answer many of the questions you may have before getting started. Our staff and volunteer leaders are here to support you every step of the way, so please don't hesitate to ask questions or seek guidance.

Thank you for believing in the power of community. Thank you for giving your time so generously. Most of all, thank you for helping us build strength, stability, self-reliance, and hope throughout Sumter.

We are honored to have you on our team, and we can't wait to see the difference we'll make. Together.

With gratitude,

Tracy Schroeder
Director of Development, Communications, and Volunteers
Sumter Habitat for Humanity

"Every volunteer has the power to change a life. Thank you for choosing to change yours and someone else's by serving with Habitat."

About Habitat for Humanity

Building Homes. Building Hope. Building Stronger Communities.

Our Mission

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Our Vision

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

How Habitat Works

Habitat partners with families, volunteers, donors, and community organizations to build affordable homes. Future homeowners work alongside volunteers, complete homeowner education, and purchase their homes through an affordable mortgage.

A Hand Up, Not a Handout

One of the most important things to understand about Habitat is that we do not give away homes.

Habitat families earn the opportunity to purchase their home by partnering with Habitat throughout the process.

Families are selected based on three key criteria:

- Need for safe and affordable housing
- Ability to pay an affordable mortgage
- Willingness to partner with Habitat throughout the program

This partnership creates pride, ownership, and long-term success for homeowners while strengthening the entire community.

Sweat Equity

Partner families invest at least 300 hours serving alongside volunteers by helping build homes, volunteering in Habitat programs, and completing homeowner education.

This shared commitment creates pride, responsibility, and long-term success.

The Homeownership Model

Affordable mortgage payments, volunteer service, and community support make homeownership possible while helping future families achieve the dream of owning a safe, affordable home.

Together, we build more than houses. We build strength, stability, self-reliance, and hope for families throughout Sumter.

About Sumter Habitat for Humanity

Building Stronger Families. Building a Stronger Sumter.

Since 1987, Sumter Habitat for Humanity has been bringing people together to build safe, affordable homes and stronger communities. As a locally governed affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to achieve the stability and independence that comes with homeownership.

Our mission extends far beyond constructing houses. We partner with hardworking families, dedicated volunteers, generous donors, local businesses, churches, and community organizations to create lasting opportunities for families to build brighter futures. Every project we undertake strengthens neighborhoods, fosters self-reliance, and helps create a more vibrant Sumter.

Today, Sumter Habitat serves our community through a variety of programs that address housing needs at every stage of life:

- Affordable Homeownership – Partnering with qualified families to build and purchase safe, affordable homes.
- Habitat ReStore – Selling donated home improvement materials, furniture, and household items to fund Habitat's mission while providing affordable shopping opportunities.
- Richardson Ramp Program – Building wheelchair-accessible ramps that help older adults and individuals with mobility challenges remain safe and independent in their homes.
- Senior Cottage Initiative – Expanding affordable housing opportunities designed specifically for seniors in our community.
- Volunteer & Community Engagement – Connecting individuals, businesses, schools, churches, and civic groups with meaningful opportunities to serve.
- Special Events & Fundraising – Bringing the community together to raise awareness and support affordable housing initiatives.

Whether you're volunteering for a few hours, joining us for a build day, serving in the ReStore, or becoming a long-term supporter, you are helping create lasting change. Every nail driven, every donation accepted, every customer greeted, and every hour volunteered moves another family closer to the stability of a safe place to call home.

Together, We Are Building More Than Homes

At Sumter Habitat for Humanity, we're building stronger families, stronger neighborhoods, and a stronger community. One home, one volunteer, and one act of service at a time.

Welcome to the team. We're grateful you're here!

Learn more about Sumter Habitat for Humanity at www.habitatsumter.org.

Our Programs and Volunteer Opportunities

Homeownership Program (Construction/Building)

At the heart of our mission is the Homeownership Program, where we partner with hardworking families to build safe, affordable homes. Future homeowners contribute sweat equity, complete homeowner education, and purchase their homes through an affordable mortgage.

Volunteers are essential to every build day. Helping frame walls, paint, landscape, and complete countless other tasks that turn a house into a home. Together, we create opportunities for families to build brighter futures.

Habitat ReStore

The Habitat ReStore is a nonprofit home improvement store that accepts and sells donated furniture, appliances, building materials, and home décor at affordable prices. Every purchase supports Sumter Habitat's mission by funding local housing programs while keeping reusable materials out of landfills.

Volunteers help greet customers, organize merchandise, process donations, test items, stock shelves, assist with donation pickups, and create a welcoming shopping experience.

Richardson Ramp Program

The Richardson Ramp Program provides wheelchair-accessible ramps for older adults and individuals with mobility challenges, allowing them to safely enter and exit their homes while maintaining their independence.

Volunteers work alongside experienced construction leaders to build ramps that improve accessibility, safety, and quality of life. Every ramp built helps a neighbor remain safely in the home they love.

Senior Cottage Initiative

The Senior Cottage Initiative is an innovative housing program designed to provide safe, affordable, and accessible homes for older adults in Sumter. By creating thoughtfully designed cottage-style homes, we are helping seniors age with dignity, independence, and security.

Volunteers will play an important role through construction, landscaping, community beautification, and ongoing neighborhood support as this exciting initiative grows.

Special Events

Throughout the year, Sumter Habitat hosts fundraising and community events that raise awareness and support affordable housing in our community. These events bring together volunteers, sponsors, donors, and community partners while celebrating the impact of our mission.

Volunteers assist with event setup, registration, hospitality, decorating, guest services, auctions, clean-up, and creating memorable experiences for attendees.

Board of Directors & Committee Service

Help shape the future of affordable housing in Sumter County by serving on the Sumter Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors or one of our volunteer committees. These leadership opportunities allow you to share your professional skills, community connections, and passion for service while helping guide our mission. Whether your expertise is in finance, construction, fundraising, marketing, governance, or community engagement, your leadership can make a lasting impact.

No Experience? No Problem!

Most volunteer opportunities do not require previous experience. Our staff and experienced volunteers provide the training, tools, and support you need to succeed. Whether you're swinging a hammer for the first time or sharing your professional expertise, your willingness to serve is what matters most.

Volunteer Tip: Bring a positive attitude, wear comfortable clothes and closed-toe shoes, and be ready to make a difference. Every volunteer plays an important role in helping build strength, stability, self-reliance, and hope in Sumter!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY	ESTIMATED SKILL LEVEL	AGE REQUIREMENT	WHAT TO EXPECT
 Home Construction	Beginner to Advanced	16+	Work alongside experienced construction leaders building homes. No construction experience is required—training is provided. Tasks may include framing, painting, siding, landscaping, trim work, and site cleanup.
 Habitat ReStore	Beginner	16+	Assist customers, organize merchandise, stock shelves, process donations, test items, help with donation pickups, and support daily store operations. Great for volunteers who enjoy retail, organization, or customer service.
 Richardson Ramp Program	Beginner to Intermediate	16+	Help build wheelchair-accessible ramps for neighbors with mobility challenges. Volunteers work under the guidance of experienced leaders using basic construction skills.
 Senior Cottage Initiative	Beginner to Advanced	16+	Support the construction and beautification of affordable senior housing through building, painting, landscaping, and neighborhood improvement projects.
 Special Events	Beginner	16+	Assist with event setup, registration, hospitality, decorating, guest services, fundraising activities, and clean-up. Perfect for volunteers who enjoy interacting with people.
 Office & Administrative Support	Beginner to Intermediate	16+	Help with data entry, mailings, filing, phone calls, volunteer coordination, and other office projects that keep our mission moving forward.
 Board of Directors & Committees	Professional experience preferred	18+	Provide leadership, strategic guidance, and community connections by serving on the Board or committees such as Finance, Construction, Resource Development, Governance, Marketing, or Family Services.
 Group Volunteer Days	Beginner	16+	Churches, businesses, schools, civic groups, and families work together on construction projects, ReStore projects, or special events. It's a rewarding team-building experience that creates a lasting community impact.

Volunteers ages 16 and 17 are welcome to serve but must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or responsible adult (18 years or older) throughout their volunteer experience. To ensure all participants have completed the required registration and liability waiver, the accompanying adult must also register through Sumter Habitat for Humanity's online volunteer registration system before volunteering.

Sumter Habitat for Humanity reserves the right to conduct criminal background checks and sex offender registry screenings on prospective volunteers. Individuals with convictions involving violent offenses, sexual offenses, crimes against children, or other offenses that may pose a risk to the safety of our volunteers, staff, homeowners, or customers are not eligible to volunteer.

These requirements help ensure a safe, positive, and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Your Volunteer Journey

Whether you're volunteering for the first time or returning for another project, we're committed to making your experience enjoyable, meaningful, and rewarding. Here's what you can expect every step of the way.

Before You Volunteer

A little preparation helps ensure a safe and successful volunteer experience.

Volunteer Checklist

- ☐ Register through our online volunteer registration system.
- ☐ Complete your annual volunteer waiver.
- ☐ Watch for an email on next steps to complete onboarding.
- ☐ Sign up for your volunteer shift.
- ☐ Review your confirmation email for location and arrival instructions.
- ☐ Wear comfortable clothing appropriate for your volunteer assignment.
- ☐ Wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes.
- ☐ Bring a refillable water bottle.
- ☐ Bring lunch if volunteering for a full-day shift.
- ☐ Notify us as soon as possible if you need to cancel.

Volunteer Tip: New to Habitat? Don't worry! No experience is necessary for most volunteer opportunities. Our staff and experienced volunteers will provide the guidance and training you need.

Your First Day

Welcome! We want your first experience to be fun, safe, and inspiring.

When you arrive, you will:

First Day Checklist

- ☐ Check in with a staff member or volunteer leader.
- ☐ Sign in for your volunteer shift.
- ☐ Meet your team and site leader.
- ☐ Receive a safety orientation.
- ☐ Learn about the day's projects.
- ☐ Receive any necessary tools or safety equipment.
- ☐ Be paired with experienced volunteers if needed.
- ☐ Ask questions—we're here to help!

Volunteer Tip: Introduce yourself to other volunteers! Habitat volunteers come from all walks of life, and many lifelong friendships have started on a build site.

During Your Volunteer Experience

Every volunteer plays an important role in helping us build strength, stability, self-reliance, and hope.

While volunteering, we ask that you:

-  Work safely and follow all instructions.
-  Stay hydrated and take breaks as needed.
-  Ask questions if you're unsure about a task.

- ✓ Respect fellow volunteers, staff, homeowners, customers, and community members.
- ✓ Wear required safety equipment.
- ✓ Work as part of the team.
- ✓ Enjoy the experience!

Remember, no job is too small. Whether you're organizing donations in the ReStore, serving at an event, painting a room, or framing a wall, your work makes a difference.

Volunteer Tip: Focus on learning, serving, and having fun. The impact of your time extends far beyond today's project.

After Your Shift

Your volunteer day may be over, but your impact continues.

Before you leave:

- ✓ End-of-Day Checklist
- ☐ Return any borrowed tools or equipment.
- ☐ Clean your work area.
- ☐ Sign out before leaving.
- ☐ Ask staff about upcoming volunteer opportunities.
- ☐ Share your experience with friends and family.
- ☐ Follow Sumter Habitat for Humanity on social media.
- ☐ Consider scheduling your next volunteer day.

Every hour you volunteer helps build stronger families and a stronger community.

Volunteer Tip: We'd love to see your experience! Share your volunteer photos on social media and tag @SumterHabitatforHumanity to help inspire others to get involved.

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Sumter Habitat for Humanity. Your willingness to give your time, talents, and heart helps create opportunities for families to achieve safe, affordable homeownership.

Dress Code

Dress for Success and Safety

Thank you for representing Sumter Habitat for Humanity! Dressing appropriately helps ensure your safety, comfort, and a positive experience for everyone. Please review the guidelines below based on where you'll be volunteering.

Construction Sites

- ☒ Wear
 - ☐ Closed-toe, sturdy shoes or work boots (required)
 - ☐ Comfortable work clothes that can get dirty
 - ☐ Jeans or durable work pants
 - ☐ Shorts of an appropriate length (weather permitting)
 - ☐ Hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses (recommended)
 - ☐ Work gloves (if you have them—we can provide them if needed)
 - ☐ Weather-appropriate layers

☐ Please Don't Wear

- ☒ Sandals, flip-flops, slides, or open-toe shoes
- ☒ Loose jewelry
- ☒ Baggy clothing that could catch on tools
- ☒ Clothing with offensive language or graphics
- ☒ Torn or excessively revealing clothing

Habitat ReStore

- ☒ Wear
 - ☐ Closed-toe shoes (required)
 - ☐ Comfortable pants or jeans
 - ☐ Shirt with sleeves
 - ☐ Volunteer apron or vest (provided)
 - ☐ Weather-appropriate clothing

☐ Please Don't Wear

- ☒ Flip-flops, slippers, sandals, slides, or open-toe shoes
- ☒ Tank tops
- ☒ Leggings or athletic wear as outerwear
- ☒ Clothing that is excessively revealing
- ☒ Clothing with offensive language or graphics

Special Events

- ☒ Wear
 - ☐ Comfortable, neat attire
 - ☐ Closed-toe shoes when assisting with setup or teardown
 - ☐ Event t-shirt (if provided)
 - ☐ Business casual attire for donor or community events, when requested

Please Don't Wear

- ☒ Clothing that is excessively casual or inappropriate for guests
- ☒ Clothing with offensive language or graphics

Office & Administrative Support

Wear

- ☐ Business casual attire
- ☐ Clean, comfortable clothing
- ☐ Closed-toe shoes recommended

Please Don't Wear

- ☒ Torn or stained clothing
- ☒ Athletic wear
- ☒ Clothing that is excessively revealing
- ☒ Clothing with offensive language or graphics

Dress for the Weather

South Carolina weather can change quickly, so please come prepared.

Hot Weather

- Stay hydrated.
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing.
- Apply sunscreen before arriving.
- Bring a hat and sunglasses if working outdoors.

Cool or Rainy Weather

- Dress in layers.
- Bring a rain jacket if rain is expected.
- Wear clothing appropriate for changing conditions.

A Few Final Tips

-  Dress comfortably. You'll likely be active throughout your shift.
-  Leave valuable jewelry at home.
-  Keep long hair tied back when working around tools or equipment.
-  When required, always wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided.

Volunteer Tip: If you're ever unsure what to wear, just ask! Our staff is happy to help you prepare so you can have a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable volunteer experience.

To help maintain a safe and professional environment, Sumter Habitat for Humanity reserves the right to ask volunteers who are not dressed appropriately for their volunteer assignment to return home and change before participating. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in helping us ensure the safety, comfort, and positive experience of everyone on site.

Volunteer Expectations and Conduct

Together, We Create a Positive Volunteer Experience

At Sumter Habitat for Humanity, we believe volunteering should be rewarding, meaningful, and enjoyable. Every volunteer contributes to our mission of building strength, stability, self-reliance, and hope. By working together with respect and integrity, we create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

We Ask That You...

Be Professional

- Represent Sumter Habitat for Humanity in a positive and respectful manner.
- Follow the guidance of staff and volunteer leaders.
- Complete assigned tasks to the best of your ability.
- Ask questions whenever you need clarification.
- Use appropriate language and conversation.

Work as a Team

- Be supportive, encouraging, and willing to help others.
- Treat fellow volunteers, homeowners, customers, donors, and staff with kindness and respect.
- Work together to accomplish shared goals and celebrate each other's successes.

Communicate Openly

- Let us know as soon as possible if you're unable to attend your scheduled volunteer shift.
- Share any concerns or questions with your volunteer leader or staff member.
- Offer ideas and feedback that help improve the volunteer experience.

Be Dependable

- Arrive on time and ready to volunteer.
- Sign in when you arrive and sign out before leaving.
- Notify staff if you need to leave early.
- Honor the time commitment you've made.

Respect Confidentiality

- Respect the privacy of homeowners, fellow volunteers, donors, and staff.
- Do not share personal or confidential information learned while volunteering.
- Ask permission before sharing stories or photos that identify individuals.

Make Safety Your Priority

- Follow all safety guidelines and instructions.
- Wear appropriate clothing and required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Use tools and equipment only after receiving proper instruction.
- Report unsafe conditions, accidents, or injuries immediately.
- Know your limits and never perform a task you're uncomfortable completing.

We Promise To...

Value Your Service

- Treat every volunteer with dignity, appreciation, and respect.
- Recognize the important role you play in our mission.
- Create meaningful opportunities to serve, learn, and grow.

Prepare You for Success

- Provide the training, tools, and guidance you need.
- Match your skills and interests with volunteer opportunities whenever possible.
- Ensure you have a clear understanding of your responsibilities.

Foster a Welcoming Environment

- Create an inclusive, respectful, and encouraging atmosphere where everyone belongs.
- Welcome volunteers of all backgrounds, experience levels, and abilities.
- Encourage teamwork, collaboration, and mutual support.

Prioritize Your Safety

- Maintain a safe volunteer environment.
- Provide appropriate safety training and equipment.
- Address safety concerns promptly and responsibly.

Listen and Support You

- Encourage open communication and welcome your questions.
- Provide assistance whenever you need it.
- Value your feedback as we continually improve our volunteer program.

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS & NON-DISCRIMINATION

Every Volunteer Matters

At Sumter Habitat for Humanity, we believe every volunteer deserves a positive, meaningful, and rewarding experience. While volunteers have important responsibilities, they also have rights.

As a volunteer, you can expect to:

Be Treated with Respect

Every volunteer deserves to be treated with dignity, kindness, fairness, and appreciation regardless of age, race, religion, gender, disability, background, or experience level.

Work in a Safe Environment

We are committed to providing a safe volunteer experience through training, supervision, proper equipment, and safety procedures.

Receive Proper Training

You will receive the guidance and instruction needed to safely complete your assigned volunteer tasks. Questions are always encouraged.

Meaningful Opportunities to Serve

We strive to match volunteers with assignments that make a real difference while considering individual interests, abilities, and physical limitations whenever possible.

Ask Questions

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time. If something is unclear, unsafe, or outside your comfort level, please let a staff member or volunteer leader know immediately.

Decline Unsafe Work

No volunteer is expected to perform work they believe is unsafe or beyond their physical abilities. Your safety always comes first.

Share Feedback

We welcome your suggestions for improving our volunteer program. Your ideas help us create an even better experience for future volunteers.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Sumter Habitat for Humanity is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities are provided without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable law.

We believe our diversity strengthens our organization and our community, and we are committed to treating every individual with dignity and respect.

Community Service Volunteers

Sumter Habitat for Humanity welcomes individuals completing court-ordered, civic, or other approved community service hours. Community service volunteers play an important role in supporting our mission while gaining valuable service experience.

Before You Begin

To participate, community service volunteers must:

- Register through our online volunteer registration system.
- Complete all required volunteer forms and waivers.
- Attend any required orientation or safety training.
- Provide any documentation required by the referring agency, school, or court before beginning service.
- Sign in and sign out for every volunteer shift. Hours will only be verified for time that has been completed and properly documented.

Volunteer Expectations

Community service volunteers are expected to uphold the same standards as all Sumter Habitat for Humanity volunteers by:

- Arriving on time and ready to work.
- Following all safety policies and staff instructions.
- Treating staff, volunteers, customers, and homeowners with courtesy and respect.
- Completing assigned tasks to the best of their ability.
- Communicating in advance if they are unable to attend a scheduled shift.

Attendance & Conduct Policy

Community service opportunities are limited and depend on reliable volunteers. Failure to report for a scheduled volunteer shift without advance notice (no-show), repeated cancellations, or failure to follow Habitat policies, safety guidelines, or staff instructions may result in the immediate deactivation of your volunteer status. Individuals whose volunteer status is deactivated may forfeit the opportunity to complete community service hours with Sumter Habitat for Humanity, and the referring agency, school, or court may be notified when appropriate.

Verification of Volunteer Hours

Verification of completed community service hours is provided only by the Director of Development, Communications, and Volunteers. Requests for verification letters, forms, or other documentation must be submitted at least 48 business hours before the documentation is needed. Requests received with less than 48 business hours' notice cannot be guaranteed. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring all required paperwork is submitted in a timely manner.

Important: Successful completion of community service hours is based on attendance, performance, and adherence to Sumter Habitat for Humanity's volunteer policies and procedures. We appreciate your commitment to serving our community with integrity, professionalism, and respect.

Group Volunteers

Serving Together. Making a Difference Together.

Thank you for choosing Sumter Habitat for Humanity for your group volunteer experience! Whether you're representing a business, church, civic organization, school, sports team, or community group, your service helps build stronger families and a stronger Sumter.

Group volunteer days are a rewarding way to strengthen relationships, develop teamwork, and make a lasting impact in our community.

Scheduling Your Group

To ensure the best experience, group volunteer opportunities must be scheduled in advance.

Before Your Volunteer Day

- ✓ Contact our Volunteer Office to discuss available dates. 803.775.5767 ext 104
- ✓ Designate one primary group leader as the point of contact.
- ✓ Provide an estimated number of participants.
- ✓ Complete all required volunteer registrations and waivers before arrival.
- ✓ Notify us promptly if your group size changes.

Planning Tip: Larger groups should schedule several weeks in advance, as volunteer dates fill quickly.

What We Expect from Your Group

We ask every group to:

- Ask each person in your group to register online and complete waivers at least 72 hours in advance.
- Ask each person to sign up for the shift chosen for your group at least 72 hours in advance.
- Wear appropriate clothing and closed-toe shoes.
- Follow all safety guidelines and staff instructions.
- Treat staff, homeowners, customers, fellow volunteers, and teammates with courtesy and respect.
- Work together with a positive attitude and willingness to help wherever needed.
-

No previous construction or retail experience is necessary. Our staff will provide instruction and assign tasks based on your group's abilities and the day's needs.

A Great Team-Building Experience

Volunteering with Habitat is more than giving back; it's an opportunity to grow together.

Group volunteer days help build:

- Stronger communication
- Leadership skills
- Problem-solving abilities
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Community pride
- Lasting memories

Many organizations make Habitat an annual tradition because of the meaningful impact their teams experience both on and off the worksite.

Safety Comes First

Your safety is our highest priority.

Before beginning work, every group will receive a safety orientation covering:

- ✓ Site expectations
- ✓ Proper use of tools and equipment
- ✓ Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ✓ Emergency procedures
- ✓ Safe lifting techniques
- ✓ Hydration and heat safety

Please follow all instructions from Habitat staff and volunteer leaders throughout the day. Anyone acting in an unsafe manner may be asked to stop work or leave the volunteer site.

Group Leader Responsibilities

Each group must designate a Group Leader who will serve as the primary contact before and during the volunteer day.

The Group Leader is responsible for:

- Communicating volunteer details to participants.
- Ensuring all participants complete registration and required waivers.
- Confirming the final group attendance before the volunteer day.
- Arriving with the group and checking in with Habitat staff.
- Helping communicate instructions throughout the day.
- Notifying Habitat immediately of any cancellations or schedule changes.

Weather Policy

If weather impacts your volunteer day, Habitat staff will notify your Group Leader as soon as possible regarding any changes.

Meals & Refreshments

Groups volunteering for a full-day project are encouraged to bring lunch, snacks, and refillable water bottles.

Some corporate sponsors or volunteer groups choose to provide lunch for their team or for Habitat staff and volunteers. If your group is interested in sponsoring a meal, please let us know in advance so we can help coordinate logistics.

Hydration stations and rest breaks will be provided throughout the day, especially during warmer months.

Photos & Social Media

We love celebrating our volunteers!

During your volunteer experience, Habitat staff may take photos or videos for use in newsletters, social media, marketing materials, grant reports, and other organizational communications.

We encourage your group to capture and share your experience as well!

When posting on social media:

- Tag Sumter Habitat for Humanity
- Use our event or campaign hashtags when provided
- Celebrate your team's impact and the Habitat mission
- Please be respectful of homeowner privacy and follow any staff guidance regarding photography

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Your Safety Is Our Highest Priority

While volunteer activities are generally safe, emergencies can happen. Every volunteer plays an important role in helping maintain a safe work environment.

If an emergency occurs, remain calm and immediately notify a Habitat staff member or volunteer leader.

Medical Emergencies

If someone is seriously injured or experiences a medical emergency:

- Stop work immediately.
- Notify the nearest staff member or volunteer leader.
- Call 911 if directed or if immediate emergency assistance is needed.
- Do not move an injured person unless they are in immediate danger.
- Stay with the individual until help arrives.

All injuries, regardless of severity, should be reported before leaving the volunteer site.

Fire

If a fire occurs:

- Notify staff immediately.
- Move away from the area safely.
- Follow staff instructions.
- Do not attempt to extinguish large fires.
- Call 911 if necessary.

Severe Weather

South Carolina weather can change quickly.

If lightning, severe thunderstorms, tornado warnings, or other dangerous weather develops:

- Stop work immediately.
- Secure tools if instructed.
- Move to a safe shelter.
- Wait for staff to determine when it is safe to resume activities.

Never remain on ladders, roofs, scaffolding, or open construction sites during lightning.

Heat Safety

Working outdoors can be physically demanding.

To prevent heat-related illness:

- Drink water frequently.
- Take breaks as needed.
- Wear sunscreen and a hat.
- Notify staff immediately if you experience dizziness, nausea, confusion, muscle cramps, or excessive fatigue.
-

Reporting Unsafe Conditions

If you notice:

- Damaged tools

- Trip hazards
- Electrical hazards
- Structural concerns
- Unsafe behavior
- Unsafe equipment

Report it immediately.

Never assume someone else has already reported the issue.

For any emergency:

- Notify the nearest Habitat staff member.
- Follow all staff instructions.
- Call 911 when immediate emergency assistance is needed.
-

Your safety is always more important than completing a task.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Cell Phone Use

We understand volunteers may need to remain accessible during the day. However, personal cell phone use should be limited to breaks or emergencies while volunteering.

For your safety:

- Do not use cell phones while operating tools or equipment.
- Avoid distractions on active construction sites.
- Photography should never interfere with safety or assigned tasks.

Smoking & Vaping

To provide a healthy environment for everyone:

- Smoking and vaping are only permitted in designated outdoor areas, if available.
- Smoking and vaping are prohibited inside Habitat homes, the ReStore, offices, vehicles, and enclosed work areas.
- Please dispose of smoking materials properly.

Drug & Alcohol Policy

The safety of our volunteers, homeowners, staff, and customers depends on everyone remaining alert and capable of performing assigned tasks.

Volunteers may not:

- Volunteer while under the influence of alcohol.
- Volunteer while under the influence of illegal drugs.
- Misuse prescription medications that impair judgment or safe performance.
- Possess illegal drugs while participating in Habitat activities.

Any volunteer appearing impaired may be asked to leave immediately.

Weather Policy

Volunteer activities may be delayed, shortened, rescheduled, or canceled because of:

- Severe thunderstorms
- Lightning
- Tornado watches or warnings
- Excessive heat
- Flooding
- Hurricanes
- Other hazardous weather conditions

If conditions require cancellation, registered volunteers will be notified as soon as possible by Habitat staff through email, phone, or the volunteer registration system.

Photography & Social Media

Photos and videos may be taken during volunteer activities for use in newsletters, social media, grant reports, publications, and marketing materials.

Volunteers who prefer not to appear in photographs should notify a staff member before volunteering begins.

When sharing your own photos:

- Respect the privacy of partner families.
- Avoid posting confidential information or home addresses.
- Tag Sumter Habitat for Humanity whenever possible.
- Represent Habitat positively and professionally

Contact Information

We're Here to Help!

Whether you have a question before your volunteer day or need assistance afterward, our team is happy to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Main Office

Sumter Habitat for Humanity

812 S. Guignard Drive

Sumter, SC 29150

Phone: (803) 775-5767

Email: info@habitatsumter.org

Office Hours:

Tuesday–Friday | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Volunteer Coordinator

Director of Development, Communications, and Volunteers

(803) 775-5767 ext 104

tracy@habitatsumter.org

Contact for:

- Individual volunteer opportunities
- Group volunteer days
- Community service hours
- Volunteer questions
- Registration assistance
- *Any issues or concerns that have not been resolved by the on-site volunteer leader or Habitat staff*

Executive Director

(803) 775-5767 ext 103

theresa@habitatsumter.org

Contact for:

- Any issues or concerns that have not been resolved by the volunteer coordinator

Website

Visit us online to learn more about our mission, upcoming volunteer opportunities, events, and ways to support affordable housing in Sumter.

www.habitatsumter.org

Follow Us

Stay connected and see the impact you're making!

Facebook facebook.com/SumterHabitatForHumanity

Instagram @sumterhabitat

Volunteer Code of Conduct

At Sumter Habitat for Humanity, every volunteer plays an important role in creating a safe, welcoming, and positive experience for our homeowners, fellow volunteers, customers, donors, and community partners. We ask all volunteers to uphold the following standards of conduct while representing Habitat.

Respect Others

We believe every person deserves to be treated with dignity, kindness, and respect.

As a Habitat volunteer, we ask that you:

- Treat everyone with courtesy, compassion, and professionalism.
- Welcome people of all backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
- Listen respectfully and communicate with kindness.
- Support fellow volunteers and work together as a team.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of homeowners, volunteers, donors, and staff.

Act Safely

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Please help us maintain a safe environment by:

- Following all safety rules and staff instructions.
- Wearing appropriate clothing and required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Using tools and equipment only after receiving proper instruction.
- Reporting unsafe conditions, accidents, injuries, or damaged equipment immediately.
- Working within your comfort level and asking for assistance whenever needed.

Protect Habitat

Every volunteer helps care for the resources entrusted to our organization.

Please:

- Treat Habitat property, tools, equipment, and donated materials with care.
- Help keep work areas clean and organized.
- Use Habitat equipment only for approved volunteer activities.
- Respect the generosity of our donors by using supplies responsibly.
- Report lost, damaged, or malfunctioning equipment promptly.

Be Professional

Your actions reflect the values of Sumter Habitat for Humanity.

We ask every volunteer to:

- Arrive on time and prepared for your volunteer assignment.
- Follow the guidance of Habitat staff and volunteer leaders.
- Complete assigned tasks to the best of your ability.
- Communicate promptly if you are unable to attend a scheduled volunteer shift.
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and accountability in all interactions.

Represent Habitat Well

Every volunteer serves as an ambassador for our mission.

Please:

- Speak positively about Habitat for Humanity and our mission.
- Welcome customers, donors, homeowners, and visitors with a friendly attitude.

- Help create a positive experience for everyone you encounter.
- Use social media responsibly and respectfully.
- Celebrate the impact of affordable homeownership while protecting the privacy of partner families.

Conduct That Will Not Be Tolerated

To ensure a safe and respectful environment, the following behaviors may result in immediate dismissal from the volunteer program:

- Harassment, discrimination, bullying, or threatening behavior.
- Violence or abusive language toward others.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possession of weapons where prohibited by Habitat policy.
- Theft, dishonesty, or intentional damage to Habitat property or the property of others.
- Failure to follow safety rules or repeated disregard for staff instructions.
- Any behavior that jeopardizes the safety, well-being, or reputation of Sumter Habitat for Humanity.

Our Commitment

Together, we create an environment built on respect, safety, teamwork, integrity, and service. By following these standards, you help ensure that every volunteer, homeowner, customer, and community member experiences the welcoming spirit of Sumter Habitat for Humanity.

Thank you for representing our mission with professionalism, compassion, and a servant's heart.

Volunteer Agreement & Acknowledgement

Thank you for volunteering with Sumter Habitat for Humanity. Your willingness to serve helps build strength, stability, self-reliance, and hope throughout our community. To help ensure a safe, positive, and rewarding experience for everyone, we ask that you review and acknowledge the following Volunteer Agreement.

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

Safety

☐ I understand that volunteer activities may involve inherent risks. I agree to follow all safety policies, procedures, and instructions provided by Sumter Habitat for Humanity staff and volunteer leaders. I will use required personal protective equipment (PPE), work within my abilities, and immediately report any accidents, injuries, unsafe conditions, or damaged equipment.

Confidentiality

☐ I understand that, while volunteering, I may become aware of confidential information regarding homeowners, volunteers, donors, staff, or the organization. I agree to respect the privacy of others and will not disclose confidential or sensitive information obtained through my volunteer service.

Code of Conduct

☐ I have read and understand the Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to represent Sumter Habitat for Humanity with professionalism, integrity, respect, and kindness. I understand that failure to follow these standards may result in the suspension or termination of my volunteer privileges.

Volunteer Expectations

☐ I understand my responsibilities as a volunteer, including arriving on time, communicating if I am unable to attend a scheduled shift, following staff direction, treating others with respect, and helping maintain a safe and welcoming environment.

Liability Waiver

☐ I understand that I must complete the online Sumter Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Liability Waiver before participating in volunteer activities. I acknowledge that this Volunteer Agreement does not replace the liability waiver and that both documents are required for participation.

Photo & Media Release

☐ I understand that photographs and videos may be taken during volunteer activities for use in Sumter Habitat for Humanity publications, social media, marketing materials, grant reports, and other communications. I understand that any questions or requests regarding media use should be discussed with Habitat staff.

Commitment to Our Mission

☐ I understand that I am representing Sumter Habitat for Humanity while volunteering. I commit to supporting the organization's mission, respecting fellow volunteers and partner families, and helping create a positive experience for everyone involved.

Volunteer Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Sumter Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Handbook. I agree to follow the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook and understand that failure to do so may result in the suspension or termination of my volunteer privileges.

I understand that this handbook is intended to provide general guidelines for volunteers and does not constitute a contract or guarantee of volunteer service. Sumter Habitat for Humanity reserves the right to modify its policies, procedures, and volunteer guidelines as needed.

Volunteer Information

Volunteer Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

For Office Use Only

- ☐ Volunteer Registration Completed
- ☐ Liability Waiver Received
- ☐ Background Check Completed (if applicable)
- ☐ Safety Orientation Completed
- ☐ Youth Volunteer Documentation Received (if applicable)
- ☐ Community Service Documentation Received (if applicable)

Staff Initials: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Thank You for Joining Our Mission

Together, we are building more than homes. We are building stronger families, stronger neighborhoods, and a stronger Sumter. Thank you for investing your time, talents, and heart in our community.

We are grateful to have you as part of the Sumter Habitat for Humanity Team!