



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Palouse Habitat for Humanity (Palouse HFH). We build partnerships among volunteers, future homeowners and the community to transform lives and revitalize neighborhoods by enabling individuals and families in need to earn and own a simple, decent, affordable home.

It is our hope that you will join us in this partnership and that your work is successful and fulfilling. We rely on volunteers like you to help our neighbors realize the dream of homeownership. From construction and the day-to-day operations of the Palouse Habitat ReStore, to the office, special events, and task forces that, among other things, select future homeowners and identify land for future home sites, we rely on volunteers in every facet of our organization.

To help you represent Habitat in the best way possible and to help make your volunteer experience as positive as it can be, this handbook outlines the general policies and practices of Palouse HFH. Palouse HFH reserves the right to change, add to, or eliminate any of the policies and/or practices described in this handbook.

Thanks again for your interest in partnering with us!

Vision Statement

A world where everyone has a decent place to live

Mission statement

To serve our neighbors in need by working to eliminate poverty housing on the Palouse and worldwide

Habitat 101

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty and homelessness. Habitat for Humanity welcomes people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together working in partnership with those in need. Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds simple, decent houses with the help of the future homeowner. Habitat houses are sold to future homeowners at no profit and are financed with affordable loans.

Habitat is a hand up, not a handout. In addition to paying a portion of the closing costs and paying their monthly mortgage, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of labor or “sweat equity” into building their home.

Habitat is a worldwide, grass-roots movement. As of January 2024, there are more than 2,100 active affiliates in almost 100 countries, in every state in the U.S., the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Habitat has built more than 225,000 houses around the world, providing more than 13.2 million people with safe, decent, affordable shelter. HFHI was founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller. Former President Jimmy Carter partnered with Habitat in 1984 and has become Habitat’s most famous spokesperson now joined by HGTV’s Scott brothers, and country music stars Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood.

Palouse Habitat for Humanity was founded in 1992 to serve low-income families in Latah County, Idaho and Whitman County, Washington. Palouse HFH builds one new home and repairs between 15 to 20 homes for low-income homeowners a year. As of January 2024, we have built 23 homes and repaired 234 homes.

As part of its Christian ministry, Palouse HFH tithes 10% of its income to HFHI to serve families in Guatemala and help with emergency housing response to disasters around the world. To date Palouse HFH tithe funds have built homes for 48 families in Guatemala.

Habitat homes are built to fit the needs and size of the families chosen. A typical Palouse HFH home is an energy efficient, 1200 sq. ft ranch style home with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Habitat does not build garages unless zoning or covenants require it. In 2023, a Palouse HFH home cost \$250,000, including land, materials, taxes and fees. All funds are raised locally, through fundraisers and donations, the ReStore, mortgage payments from existing Habitat homeowners, and grants.

Up to 250 volunteers work on a typical home build, and 150 volunteers serve annually in the ReStore. Among these, there is a dedicated core team for the ReStore, build site (Codger crew) as well as the office.

Volunteers keep costs low and keep homes affordable.

Our Homeowner Selection Committee chooses future homeowners based on their level of need, their willingness to become partners in the program, and their ability to repay the zero-interest mortgage loan. Every affiliate follows a nondiscrimination policy, which adheres to the letter and spirit of federal fair housing laws for homeowner selection.

Palouse Habitat is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors. There are eight part-time and full-time staff who manage day-to-day operations in conjunction with a few key volunteers.

Volunteer Opportunities

Construction:

Home Build: Building typically takes place on Thursday and Saturday, nearly year-round. Skilled and unskilled volunteers are welcome either day. We ask that you commit to at least a half-day shift. Supervision is provided, as well as tools and safety equipment. Come as an individual or bring a group (church group, book club, co-workers, etc.) Come once, once a month, or become a regular on the “Codger Crew”, our dedicated team of experienced workers.

Home Repair: Palouse HFH offers basic home repair assistance to local low-income homeowners. Many are elderly and/or disabled. Our primary focus is safe access to the home, including exterior ramps, steps and porches, however, on a case-by-case basis our team performs other repairs as well. Some ramps are permanent, others are temporary based on the homeowner’s needs. Palouse HFH partners with local agencies and service groups to carry out this mission.

Overseas Building: Palouse HFH has sent volunteer teams to Guatemala for week-long building service projects. These opportunities are available through the HFHI Global Village program.

Task Forces:

Palouse HFH carries out its work through task forces. Our current active task forces include:

- **Construction:** Coordinate building projects, secure house plans, schedule inspections and arrange for permits, estimate materials and costs, procurement of materials, and the scheduling of crew chiefs.
- **Homeowner Selection:** Once a year this group puts on public informational meetings, reviews applications, interviews applicants, check references, etc. to determine if applicant meets Habitat's selection criteria.
- **Future Homeowner Support:** Assist our future homeowners through the building process. Schedule financial and home maintenance workshops. Identify a "Sponsor" to mentor the homeowner and ensure they are meeting their Habitat obligations.
- **Site Selection:** Seek and evaluate opportunities to secure buildable lots through purchase or donation and make recommendations to the Board regarding land acquisitions.
- **Faith Relations:** Help develop relationships between Palouse HFH and churches. Communicate needs, garner support, and act as a church representative.
- **Development:** Help put on fundraisers, produce electronic or print newsletters, and update social media. Our signature fundraiser event, Beans 'n' Jeans, is a dinner/auction each April where we host over 375 guests and raise funds for the home build. Join the team and create an evening to remember.

Office:

Office volunteers answer phones, enter data, and assist staff with special projects. We're looking for friendly folks who enjoy working with people, some office experience is preferred.

Palouse Habitat ReStore:

Help operate our home improvement thrift store, greet and assist customers, price and stock new items, or be a cashier. Test and repair appliances as needed. Drive the Habitat truck to pick up donated items or deliver purchases. The ReStore is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10-5pm. Come once, once a month, or become a regular on the regular team of experienced volunteers.

Work Environment

You and Palouse HFH share the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. Palouse HFH will attempt to assure a safe work environment and to comply with federal, state and local safety regulations. You are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all of your work activities. You are also asked to report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately. Any accident, which results in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to your supervisor.

Volunteer Conduct:

Although it is not possible to list all forms of behavior or conduct that are specifically against Palouse HFH or HFHI policy, the following are examples of actions which may result in limitation and/or termination of volunteer relationship if they occur on Palouse HFH property or when an individual is engaged in activities on behalf of Palouse HFH:

- Theft or inappropriate removal of Palouse HFH property
- Smoking or vaping
- Volunteering while under the influence of alcohol, recreational or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol, recreational or illegal drugs
- Fighting or threatening violence
- Disruptive behavior or activity
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Palouse HFH or another person's property
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives or firearms
- Unsatisfactory performance
- Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's request
- Violation of safety or health rules
- False statements
- Sexual or other harassment or discrimination

Note that engaging in any illegal activity, whether the activity occurs on Palouse HFH property or while serving on behalf of Palouse HFH, may be grounds for terminating the volunteer relationship.

Harassment and Discrimination: Palouse HFH is firmly committed to providing a positive work environment free of discrimination and bias. Each volunteer is personally responsible for maintaining such a work environment. Palouse HFH prohibits any actions, words, jokes or comments or harassment based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition or other legally protected characteristic. Any conduct or action, whether overt or subtle, which creates an offensive or hostile work environment is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate dismissal from work with Palouse HFH.

