



TREEFOLKS

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK 2019



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Purpose of This Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to offer guidance to both TreeFolks staff and volunteers about TreeFolks volunteer programs. This handbook will provide information on TreeFolks volunteer practices and policies.

TreeFolks Mission, Vision and History

TreeFolks mission is to empower central Texans to build stronger communities through planting and caring for trees. TreeFolks accomplishes its mission through diverse programming that includes community building, reforestation, education, and growing the urban forest. To read the full TreeFolks story visit our website at <https://www.treefolks.org/about/#history>.

TreeFolks Programming

TreeFolks provides services through the programs listed below:

- ***Free Tree Adoptions***: TreeFolks provides free trees and tree care education to Austin area.
- ***Tree Planting & Tree Care***: TreeFolks partners with local municipal agencies to engage volunteers in public tree planting events and provides tree care opportunities in public spaces.
- ***Reforestation Services***: TreeFolks works to reforest Central Texas through large-scale tree planting and education services on public and private lands. In the wake of fire and flood, TreeFolks has been there for our neighbors — to help Central Texas reforest, heal, and restore our ecological balance.
- ***Education Services***: TreeFolks offers hands-on workshops, courses, and presentations on topics designed to provide homeowners and professionals the information needed to successfully manage our urban trees.



Ways to Volunteer with TreeFolks



Thank you for your interest in volunteering! TreeFolks hosts most of our volunteer opportunities during the Texas tree planting season (October to March). To find out about all our current volunteer opportunities, [click here](#). Do you have any special skills that can help TreeFolks with our programming? Do you have any interest in helping us with web design, mapping data, or facility maintenance? [Please follow this link to fill out our Special Projects form and get involved today!](#)

TreeFolks Volunteer Program Policies

Volunteer Definitions and Descriptions

Definition of a volunteer

A “volunteer” is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of TreeFolks. Volunteers, unless specifically stated, shall not be considered as “employees” of the organization.

Types of volunteers

“Day of Service” (DOS) volunteers: volunteers who intend to volunteer with TreeFolks for a single event. DOS volunteers receive onsite training during events either by Volunteer Supervisors or TreeFolks staff. DOS volunteers must sign-in prior to events for attendance and complete a liability waiver. DOS volunteers are welcome to join us at later events or move into Supervisor roles once they complete the proper training. DOS volunteers can consist of individuals, corporate groups, scout or church groups, etc.

Volunteer Supervisors: volunteers who receive additional training and have been thoroughly vetted by TreeFolks staff to assist in running large events such as CommuniTrees, Reforestation, and NeighborWoods Adoption Events. Volunteer Supervisors are given specific guidelines to follow in order to stay within the role and must continue to be active in the organization in order to maintain their

status. Volunteer Supervisors are also required to sign-in and complete a liability waiver prior to volunteering.

TreeFolks Ambassadors: volunteers who receive additional training and have been thoroughly vetted by TreeFolks staff to assist in tabling and development events. TreeFolks Ambassadors are given specific guidelines to follow in order to stay within the role and must continue to be active in the organization in order to maintain their status.

Volunteer Management Procedures

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as valuable resources to TreeFolks staff. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equals, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals, and procedures of the organization.

Recording of Volunteer Hours

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer including dates of service, positions held, and duties performed. For events that include onsite work with the Volunteer Coordinator, it will be the Volunteer Coordinator or appropriate staff's responsibility to collect sign-in sheets and accurately record volunteer hours. Off-site and special volunteer projects will require the volunteer to record their own hours on the [TreeFolks Hours Tracking Form](#). The Volunteer Coordinator will be able to verify hours via email by emailing volunteer@treefolks.org.

Absenteeism & Tardiness

Volunteers are critical to the success of TreeFolks programs. If you are unable to attend an event you have previously signed up for please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@treefolks.org. If you are going to be tardy to an event, please call our volunteer hotline that is provided in pre-event emails.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single member of staff, volunteer, or other person or involves the overall business of TreeFolks. Volunteers aided in TreeFolks data entry MUST sign a confidentiality agreement prior to beginning their task.

Worksite

An appropriate worksite will be established prior to the enrollment of volunteers. This worksite will contain necessary facilities, equipment and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform his or her duties. This shall include access to a bathroom, proper tools, and personal protective equipment. Since most worksites are outdoors and on uneven terrain, please understand TreeFolks is limited in the number of accommodations it can make for its volunteers.

Dress code

TreeFolks requires all volunteers to dress properly for the task they have been assigned to do. TreeFolks requires ALL volunteers assigned to a task using hand tools to be wearing closed toed shoes. Improper

footwear is grounds to be re-assigned to a different task or removed from the event. TreeFolks recommends but does not require volunteers to wear long pants when working outdoors.

Volunteer Safety Policies

Criminal Background Checks

TreeFolks will conduct criminal background checks for all Volunteer Supervisors, as well as Neighbor's Planting Trees volunteers. Any additional background checks for special projects can be conducted on volunteers at the discretion of the organization. Any volunteer who refuses a background check will be re-assigned to a different task where a background check is not required.

Harassment

A respectful work environment is essential to the wellbeing of both paid staff and volunteers. Harassment of any volunteer, employee, or program partner based on race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, medical condition, political activity, marital status, sexual preference, sex or age will not be tolerated. Harassment includes verbal harassment, physical harassment, visual forms of harassment, and sexual harassment. All volunteers should speak to their staff supervisor immediately if they are made to feel uncomfortable through any behaviors or comments of participants, staff, or other volunteers.

Alcohol and Drugs

All volunteers should report to their assignment fit to perform their responsibilities. The use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited during volunteer events. Any volunteer who reports for service under the influence of illegal drugs is subject to immediate termination. Any volunteer who reports for service while impaired using alcohol, over the counter medication, prescription drugs, or other controlled substances is also subject to immediate termination. TreeFolks hosts multiple celebrations where alcohol is provided, these celebrations are not considered volunteer events.

Injuries

Volunteers should immediately report any major injuries sustained while volunteering to their immediate supervisor. A staff or Volunteer Supervisor will be required to complete an incident report to document any major injury sustained while volunteering with TreeFolks.

Emergency Planning

TreeFolks Staff and Volunteer Supervisors will work together in order to establish an emergency plan prior to each event. This would include what to do if there is inclement weather, or a severe injury during a TreeFolks volunteer event. This plan will be included in Supervisor packets and discussed onsite.

Volunteer Dismissal

Corrective Action

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken for any volunteer not upholding TreeFolks Volunteer Program Policies. Examples of corrective action include but are not limited to, additional training, re-assignment of the volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, dismissal of the volunteer.

Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organization or who fail satisfactorily to perform a volunteer assignment may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer any affected member of staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator.

Reasons for Dismissal

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of organization equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of staff or volunteers, failure to abide by organization rules, policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Volunteer Support & Recognition

Supervisor Trainings

Additional trainings will be offered to Volunteer Supervisors who are looking to continue their education in Urban Forestry or Volunteer Management. These training events will be held throughout the year with no limitation on the number of trainings you may attend.

Insurance

Liability and accident insurance is not provided for volunteers engaged in the organizations business. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension to their personal insurance to include community volunteer work.

Recognition

An annual volunteer event will be conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to the organization. Volunteers will also receive notes, and small gifts from staff members for going above and beyond their assigned tasks with the approval of the Volunteer Coordinator.



Contact Information

Sydney Tafolla: Community Tree Planting & Volunteer Coordinator,
volunteer@treefolks.org

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