

Stack Up: Volunteer's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

A volunteer's rights

1. The right to feel valued

As a Stack Up volunteer, you have the right to feel like your time and contribution is valued. Whether you've been a volunteer for two hours or two years, you've made a significant commitment in the form of your time and energy to helping veterans and your community. You have the right to feel like Stack Up and your Stack Lead are using your time, skills, and talents well, and that the work you do has meaning and makes a difference.

2. The right to feel safe

As a Stack Up volunteer, you have the right to be informed of any potential risks associated with volunteering, as well as to have precautionary measures and safety procedures in place to ensure your physical and emotional well-being.

3. The right to information about your volunteer role

Regardless of what your question may be - about the application process, the different types of volunteer roles available at Stack Up, and the details about each volunteer role, project, and event - you have the right to know the who, what, where, when, why, and how of your volunteer position.

4. The right to negotiate your volunteer role

If you find yourself in a volunteer position that doesn't work for you, you have the right to speak with both your Stack Lead and the Stacks Program Manager to discuss ways you may be able to shift your role or take on another project or position.

5. The right to leave

Volunteering is a personal, selfless decision that is deeply appreciated, but we understand that every one of our volunteers has a life, and sometimes volunteering no longer fits into their lives easily. The decision to leave shouldn't be made hastily, but we do ask that you be open with your Stack Lead and the Stacks Program Manager if you are too busy, unsatisfied with your role, or if anything has changed that would require you to step back from volunteering. Your time is valuable, and you should never be made to feel as though you are stuck in a volunteer role that is not working for you.

A volunteer's responsibilities

1. The responsibility to communicate your needs

You have the right to feel valued, safe, and included. Let us know exactly what your needs are. If you have safety or medical concerns or requests, communicate those needs to us. If you are dissatisfied with your volunteer role, communicate to your Stack Lead or the Stacks Program Manager what's going on - whether you feel like your work isn't meaningful, or isn't what you expected to sign up for, or even if you're just bored and want to try a different volunteer role with us. We also ask that you communicate to us if you feel you need additional tools, training, or support.

2. The responsibility to follow through on your commitments

We don't expect you to be available for every event, particularly if you're going to be volunteering with a more active stack. What we do expect is that you do what you say you will do, whether it's honoring the volunteer role and schedule you agreed to, providing notice if you're unable to attend an event, saying no or stepping away if necessary, and serving as a force of good in your community.

3. The responsibility to not promise what you can't deliver

When you want to volunteer, it can be very easy to say "yes" to everything. Before committing to an event be sure to take the time to look at your schedule and make sure you're able to follow through. We know that circumstances can come up that could make last minute cancelling necessary on occasion, however we do ask that you consider that many people may be relying on you for an event.

4. The responsibility to take care of yourself

Make sure you are not overextending yourself, burning yourself out, or causing yourself physical, mental, or emotional harm by taking on roles that are not a good fit, that you are not prepared for, or that stretch you too thin. Do not hesitate to reach out if you need help, whether you need support, a break, or a change in your volunteer role. And remember to, like with anything else, set realistic expectations of yourself.

5. The responsibility to inform your Stack Lead and the Stacks Program Manager if you need to take a break

There is a pervasive myth that volunteers are unreliable, and another pervasive myth that volunteers are free. All organizations invest quite a bit in their volunteers via staff time, tools, and training, as well as the reputation of their organization. This is why it's so important to research your position to determine if it's a good fit for you, and to negotiate your volunteer role if you're unsatisfied. More than that, we ask that you speak with your Stack Lead and the Stacks Program Manager if you need to take a break or leave instead of just disappearing.