



TRAIL VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

A VOLUNTEER'S RIGHTS

1. The right to feel safe

One of the benefits of volunteering is that we can decide to intentionally leave our comfort zones 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's a question about the application process (why do I need to have a background check? when will I find out if I've been accepted?) 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 at TRAIL.

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've volunteered and whatever your task—is valued. Similarly, you have the right to feel that TRAIL is using your skills and talents well and that the work you do has meaning and makes a difference.

4. The right to negotiate your volunteer role

You have the right to talk to the TRAIL Executive Director 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 isn't a decision that should be made hastily but, if after talking to and working with the Executive Director, you still feel unhappy, unappreciated, or unsatisfied; you have the right to do something different, or go somewhere, else.

A VOLUNTEER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The responsibility to communicate your needs

Feel like your work at TRAIL isn't meaningful? Not what you thought you had signed up for? Or just bored and ready for something else? Talk to the Executive Director, providing specifics about your dissatisfaction and at least a few suggestions of ways to make it better. Similarly, do not hesitate to let the Executive Director know if you feel you need additional tools, training, or support; if she cannot provide it directly, she should at least be able to point you in the right direction.

2. The responsibility to follow through on your obligations

Do what you say you'll do, whether it's honoring the volunteer role and schedule you have agreed to, providing ample notice if you are unable to perform your tasks or responsibilities, saying no or stepping away from volunteering when necessary, or simply serving as a good representative of TRAIL in the community.

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

TRAIL values our volunteers and invests quite a bit in our volunteers via staff time, tools, training, and so on. We ask that you research volunteering at TRAIL first to determine if it's a good fit for you, and, once you're in the role, to always first try negotiating your volunteer role if you are not satisfied, rather than suddenly leaving.

4. The responsibility to take care of yourself

Last but most certainly not least, you have the responsibility to make sure that you are not overextending yourself, burning out, or causing yourself physical, mental, or emotional harm by taking on roles that are not a good fit or that you are not prepared for. While some stress and burnout may be inevitable depending on the project, you can significantly limit it by seeking out support (the Executive Director 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 and having realistic expectations about what can be accomplished and when.