

# Frequently Asked Questions

## WHY VOLUNTEER?

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### ***What are the benefits of volunteering at The Free Clinic?***

The Free Clinic is able to continually offer services free of charge to the community largely because of the generous support of volunteers, and here at The Free Clinic, we understand that volunteering is a two-way street. While we gain immense support for our mission by having a dedicated corps of volunteers, you will also gain something in return, be it skills, experience or personal fulfillment. Rest assured that before your first day the Volunteer and External Relations Office will work hard to ensure that each applicant is placed in a role that meets the needs of The Free Clinic and is a good fit for the volunteer.

### ***What expectations do you have for Free Clinic volunteers?***

Above all else, volunteers are expected to uphold the mission and philosophy of The Free Clinic. They are also expected to maintain client confidentiality, treat all clients with the utmost respect and compassionate care, and maintain professionalism at all times. For detailed information on additional volunteer expectations, refer to The Free Clinic Volunteer Welcome Packet.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

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### ***Are there opportunities available where I can get experience working directly with patients?***

Yes. We are always looking for individuals who are professionally licensed to provide services to our patients. Furthermore, we have opportunities available for those who are not trained or licensed to gain experience in a direct service capacity. Among our “no experience necessary” roles, volunteers can serve as a Client Services Representative, HIV Intervention Specialist, Intake Worker, Patient Story-Banker, Social Service Intake Worker, and Patient Assistant Program Ambassador, among others.

### ***Are all volunteer positions filled on a rolling basis?***

Most volunteer positions are filled on a rolling or as needed basis because training is on-the-job. Several roles, however, require volunteers to attend one or a series of training sessions. These positions, such as the Intake Worker and HIV Intervention Specialist roles, are filled in January, May and September when the training is offered.

### ***How will I know which volunteer positions are available?***

On the application, volunteers are asked to indicate which positions they are interested in. Then in your volunteer interview, we will explore the availabilities of the positions you selected as well as others that might match what you are looking for during your service. If you have specific questions about availability prior to applying, contact the Volunteer and External Relations Office.



***Do I have to be licensed or trained in medicine to volunteer?***

No. The Free Clinic has an immense need for volunteers who are not trained or licensed in medicine, and we have a plethora of “no experience necessary” roles available, which vary from providing direct service to helping out behind the scenes with the tasks that help The Free Clinic run from day to day. For complete position descriptions, view our “no experience necessary” volunteer opportunities.

***Do I have to be licensed in the State of Ohio if I am a licensed professional?***

Yes. To serve in a clinical capacity without supervision, you must be licensed in the State of Ohio. If you are licensed in another state or country, you may still fill any of our “no experience necessary” roles.

***What are your most popular volunteer positions?***

Our most popular volunteer positions are our Intake Worker and HIV Intervention Specialist. Both of these positions involve working directly with patients and are great if you are looking to start a career in health. A new class of volunteers for these roles is trained in January, May and September. If you interested in one of these positions, we encourage you to apply early as these roles may have waiting lists.

***Is there a limit on how often I can volunteer in a week?***

There is no limit on how often a volunteer can serve in a week; however, we encourage volunteers to start slow so they do not feel overwhelmed. Your volunteer service is incredibly valuable to us, and we don't want our volunteers to feel burnt out.

***What kind of time commitment is needed to volunteer?***

It takes a great deal of time and energy to effectively train Free Clinic volunteers. Because of this, most positions at The Free Clinic request a minimum length of service, which varies from three months to one year depending on the role. We especially appreciate long-term service since it ensures consistency for our patients. As a prospective volunteer, try to honestly evaluate your ability to commit prior to signing up for a role.

***Are there opportunities for individuals to volunteer once for done-in-a-day projects?***

Yes. If you are interested in a one-time project, please contact the Volunteer and External Relations Office. Depending on the needs of The Free Clinic at the time, we will likely be able to utilize a group of up to 15 volunteers. In the past, volunteers participating in one-time projects have helped with building and grounds beautification, assembling safe kits, and assisting with data entry, among others incredibly helpful tasks.

***Is volunteering at The Free Clinic safe?***

Yes, volunteering at The Free Clinic is safe. The Free Clinic is secured with safety personnel who patrol the facility and parking lot at all times. Also, all internal phones are equipped with a button labeled “emergency” that volunteers can push if they are in need of emergency assistance. Finally, the University Circle Police Station is located across the street from our facility should a situation arise that involves police intervention. Complete safety and emergency protocols will be reviewed with each volunteer at their individual orientation session.

***Does The Free Clinic extend liability coverage to volunteers?***

Yes. The Free Clinic extends its liability coverage for all lay level volunteers and individually licensed providers. A certificate of liability coverage can be produced upon request.



***I am currently employed. Are there still opportunities available that will work with my full-time schedule?***

Yes, but evening and weekend opportunities are limited. During evening and weekend hours, The Free Clinic provides HIV testing, specialty clinics, dental services and behavioral health counseling. We are always looking for licensed professionals to offer evening services to our patients whereas lay level opportunities may be limited. Contact the Volunteer and External Relations Office for more information.

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**ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

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***What is the application process like?***

All volunteers are required to fill out the volunteer application and return it along with two professional references by mail or in person to The Free Clinic at 12201 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. If you are a licensed professional, we also require a copy of your license as well as your resume. After your application materials are received, the Volunteer and External Relations Office will contact you for a volunteer interview.

***What is the best time of year to apply?***

There is no single best time of year to apply. It is best, however, to apply early because it can take time to process your application and schedule a volunteer interview. Furthermore, some positions may have waiting lists. In the past, volunteers on a waiting list have found it beneficial to start their service in a different position while they wait for one of these roles to open.

***How long will it take to process my application?***

When all your application materials are received, it can take 2-3 weeks to process. Once your application is processed, we will contact you to set up an interview. Please know that we receive dozens of applications each month. If you do not hear back from us within the three week time frame, feel free to follow up by contacting the Volunteer and External Relations Office.

***Do I really need two references to apply?***

Yes. An application will not be processed until it is accompanied by two professional references. At The Free Clinic, we receive a number of applications from students or other individuals looking to build experience. In this circumstance, references are acceptable from a professor, coach, club leader, etc. Reference forms should always be submitted in a signed and sealed envelope, and it is best for potential volunteers to collect completed references and include them in a single envelope along with their other application materials.

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**ONCE YOU BECOME A FREE CLINIC VOLUNTEER**

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***Is there a uniform or dress code?***

Yes. As a professional health care facility, The Free Clinic maintains a business casual dress code, and as a representative of The Free Clinic, a volunteer's attire should be appropriate to the role the volunteer performs and should not be a distraction to the services provided. Specific details about The Free Clinic dress code will be covered in your individual orientation session. Generally, closed-toed shoes are required in the Medical, Dental



and HIV Services Departments at all times, and scrubs are allowed if providing direct care to patients. Shorts and flip-flops are not permissible, and jeans are acceptable on Fridays.

***I may need a letter of recommendation. Is The Free Clinic willing to write proof of service or recommendation letters?***

Yes. We love to write proof of service or recommendations for our valued volunteers! If you have served 25 hours or 3 months with us, contact the Volunteer and External Relations Office. We will work with your volunteer supervisor to pen a letter on your behalf.

*For more information, contact the Volunteer and External Relations Office at [beavolunteer@thefreeclinic.org](mailto:beavolunteer@thefreeclinic.org).*

