



# Volunteer Handbook



Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to Urban Boatbuilders! We are so glad that you have chosen to share your time and talents with us for the benefit of the youth we serve.

It is our mission at Urban Boatbuilders to empower youth to succeed in life and work through woodworking and experiential learning. We bring this mission to life through our Apprenticeship Program and Partnership Program providing hundreds of youth each year with the opportunity to build their skills and confidence through hands-on opportunities.

We couldn't achieve this mission without you and other wonderful volunteers who support this organization in so many ways. From ripping wood to make project supplies, to building boats that bring in revenue, to ensuring that Apprentices have access to healthy snacks, to serving on our board of directors. Each volunteer plays a critical role in supporting our organization and ultimately the impact that we have on the youth we serve each and every day.

I encourage you to jump right in, ask questions, and find the right fit for you as you share your gifts with Urban Boatbuilders and our youth. Thank you so much for joining with us to build bright futures.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marc Hosmer', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Marc Hosmer  
Executive Director

## Purpose of the Handbook

Welcome to Urban Boatbuilders! Thank you for joining our volunteer team. This handbook aims to introduce you to our organization and give you all the information you need to become part of the Urban Boatbuilders community.

We depend on volunteers to make our service to youth and their community possible. Your success is our success, so please don't hesitate to ask questions at any point. Staff are more than happy to help to make sure that our volunteers feel welcome and comfortable in their positions.

Urban Boatbuilders asks that you read this handbook carefully to become acquainted with our policies, expectations, and your role here as one of our wonderful volunteers. These policies are subject to change and update, and replace all prior policies.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to serve others. We sincerely hope that you have a positive and rewarding experience here at Urban Boatbuilders.

## Organizational Information

### ***History:***

Located in St. Paul, Urban Boatbuilders was founded in 1995 by a group of educators, boat building enthusiasts and community leaders. The organization was established on the premise that wooden boat building by small groups of teens is an effective tool for youth development.

They were right! Urban Boatbuilders effectively fills a service gap for youth who find meaning and fulfillment in working with their hands to create something useful. Our boatbuilding programs promote understanding of academic content at higher levels by weaving interdisciplinary themes and applied learning into curriculum.

Urban Boatbuilders has built over 250 boats while working with more than 4,000 youth in 60 agencies, juvenile corrections programs and schools, and has also hosted more than 200 apprentices.

### ***Mission:***

Empowering youth to succeed in work and life through woodworking and experiential learning.

**Values:**

Preamble: We believe that our values are intertwined. Together, our values help define who we are, what we stand for, and give clarity to our mission. Because our values are interwoven, one value cannot function without the others.

**Collaboration**

We believe in the power of working together towards a common goal. By recognizing the valuable skills and gifts of all community members, we seek to provide opportunities for all towards the collective purpose of creating a more equitable and just society. We value compassionate and industrious teamwork and collaboration across all organizational roles and levels to bridge gaps, build relationships, and break through barriers within our communities.

**Equity**

We value and respect the unique perspectives and experiences of all people. Our team believes in providing opportunities that are tailored toward individual needs and differences to achieve authentic learning and powerful experiences. We acknowledge that Urban Boatbuilders is a steward of its community and are motivated to reduce the persistent disparities experienced by its members. We create equitable opportunities that empower our participants as well as close the multitude of gaps that exist in our society.

**Empowerment**

We believe in the power of experiential learning to create a physical framework for achievement. Our passion is to empower youth to become agents of change in their own lives and in our community. Our work builds their confidence to take chances, learn from mistakes, accomplish their goals, and develop a greater sense of self-worth.

**Continuous Improvement**

We believe in fearlessly engaging in self reflection and organizational improvement. We recognize that in order to support our youth we must be unafraid to rework, redo, and explore the ways our organization impacts and serves our community. We aim to stay relevant to the conditions in our community and to respond with flexible and conscientious actions. We believe in the power of thoughtful change and in the ability for people, places, and things to change for the better. It is with this belief that we commit to viewing our actions and intentions with a critical eye and to create space for innovation, creativity, and revision.

## Programs

Urban Boatbuilders offers two types of programming: the Apprenticeship and Partnership.

In our Apprenticeship Program, youth learn work readiness, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) skills, and social and emotional learning in our shop. They are hired on as part of a cohort working three afternoons per week over a thirteen week period. With successful completion of the Apprenticeship Program, youth can return as Youth Instructors, a higher responsibility role where they help the new cohorts with their builds and skill-learning. For more information on our Apprenticeship Program, contact Martha Brummitt at [martha@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:martha@urbanboatbuilders.org).

The Partnership Program takes Urban Boatbuilders out of the shop and into schools, camps, and afterschool programs. We send instructors, with all the equipment and supplies, to the site of the partner organization and build boats. This program centers around teaching STEM, social and emotional development, and 21st Century skills. For more information on Partnership Programs, contact Collette King at [collette@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:collette@urbanboatbuilders.org).

## Staff Summary

Marc Hosmer  
Executive Director  
[marc@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:marc@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Collette King  
Programs Director  
[collette@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:collette@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Phil Winger  
Program Manager and Instructor  
[phil@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:phil@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Michael Wurth  
Development Officer and Instructor  
[michael@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:michael@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Martha Brummitt  
Apprenticeship Coordinator and Instructor  
[martha@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:martha@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Janelle Bane  
Office Manager  
[janelle@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:janelle@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Anne Grinager  
Instructor  
[anne@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:anne@urbanboatbuilders.org)

Julie Baker  
Volunteer Manager  
[julie@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:julie@urbanboatbuilders.org)

## **Volunteer Involvement**

The following points outline the rights and responsibilities of all volunteers at Urban Boatbuilders. They aim to create a welcoming space for everyone in our community, while facilitating a positive and productive experience for all of our volunteers. These expectations should guide the behavior of all in the interest of demonstrating our values not only with the youth that we serve but with the community at large.

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- An assignment that fits your skills, desires, and goals, as well as those of the organization.
- Support in your position, including the necessary tools, training, and staff support.
- An organized orientation and training to prepare you for your volunteer position
- The opportunity to give feedback to Urban Boatbuilders about your volunteer experience
- Recognition for your role in Urban Boatbuilders' success

As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- Be courteous and respectful to youth, staff, and other volunteers
- Be accountable for your actions and their consequences
- Demonstrate commitment to our community through your actions, words, and deeds
- Attend trainings for desired position as required by Urban Boatbuilders
- Support and value other team members
- Request support when necessary
- Carry out your volunteer position according to the position description provided in the Volunteer Position Description handout
- Please support our organization by using direct communication to resolve misunderstandings, conflicts, or issues that may arise. We are eager to resolve conflicts in an equitable and kind way. For support see Policies and Procedures: Grievances and Dispute Resolution.
- Be reliable
- Let the organization know as early as possible if unable to fulfill role as expected or attend a specific volunteer opportunity
- Inform staff contact if you plan to end your tenure as a volunteer permanently and fill out an exit survey
- As a volunteer, your photo may be used in Urban Boatbuilders social media, publicity, or other official documentation of the organization.

## Policies and Procedures

1. Eligibility Requirements
  - a. Volunteers must be able to perform the full range of tasks that fall within their position description while maintaining a safe environment for themselves and others.
  - b. We strive to create a welcoming and communal environment for diverse people. Volunteers should contribute to the community and agree to follow our standards of behavior set in place to cultivate it.
2. Performance Feedback or Evaluation Procedure
  - a. We are committed to helping support our volunteer community in developing their woodworking skills. Staff provide feedback to volunteers to improve the volunteer experience and keep all members of the community healthy and safe
  - b. We welcome all feedback to improve the community and the volunteer experience.
3. Code of Conduct, Behavior or Ethics
  - a. Urban Boatbuilders welcomes a diverse group of youth, staff, and volunteers. As such, we strive to create a space in which everyone feels both valued and able to learn. Respect is paramount in how all community members address each other. Respectful words, behavior, and conversations allow for meaningful conversations to take place around topics important to people within Urban Boatbuilders.
  - b. We define respect as treating others how they would like to be treated. In order to treat all members of our community with care and consideration, we suggest the following guidelines:
    - i. Listening first
    - ii. Asking open-ended questions
    - iii. Educating yourself on issues that other community members might be facing
    - iv. Give others the benefit of the doubt, and advocate/communicate what you need to feel respected and valued in our community
4. Dress Code
  - a. Shop volunteers are expected to meet shop safety expectations of dress.
    - i. closed-toe shoes
    - ii. removal of dangling objects
    - iii. pulling back long hair
    - iv. using the provided safety glasses and ear protection as necessary.
  - b. Non-shop volunteers may dress casually, but appropriately for an environment in which professionalism is emphasized.
  - c. Wear respectful apparel (No gendered, racial, or otherwise exclusionary language represented)
5. Substance Use Policy

- a. Volunteers are not to operate power tools under the influence of any alcohol, non-prescription, or prescription medications that could impair judgment, reaction time, or otherwise endanger the safety of themselves or others. Any volunteer who behaves inappropriately due to the use of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave and receive disciplinary action.
6. Safety and Security, Emergency Procedures, Emergency Contact
    - a. General shop safety
      - i. Always follow rules and instructions posted on each machine and general shop safety.
      - ii. Maintain awareness of the work happening around you, since often many jobs occur simultaneously and a lack of attention can result in dangerous situations for all involved parties.
    - b. Power tool safety
      - i. Always wear safety glasses
      - ii. Wear proper hearing protection
      - iii. NEVER wear gloves when operating power tools
      - iv. Restrain loose or dangling clothing, jewelry, and long hair
7. Grievances or Dispute Resolution
    - a. Volunteers may raise grievances with the staff lead for their crew. If they feel uncomfortable addressing their grievance with this individual, they may contact the Executive Director, Marc Hosmer at [marc@urbanboatbuilders.org](mailto:marc@urbanboatbuilders.org).

## **Organizational Information**

### **Commonly Used Acronyms for Boat Building:**

- UT: Urban Traveler, 15' skin-on-frame canoe
- WT: Wilderness Traveler, 17' skin-on-frame canoe
- Loon: Kayak
- SUP: Stand-up paddleboards
- Longs: Long pieces of a boat kit
- Shorts: Short pieces of a boat kit
- Kit: All parts needed to build a boat

### **Directions & Parking**

We're a little set back from University Ave. and you can get to us via N. Hampden Ave. or LaSalle St. Parking is available at both the front and rear of the building, near both entrances to the shop. The front door (closer to University) is wheelchair accessible, while the back door is not. We're also a five minute walk from the green line's Raymond Ave. stop.

### **Holidays and Office Hours**

Urban Boatbuilders' offices are usually open during business hours, though this varies due to our small staff. We recognize national and state holidays. We inform our volunteers if a regularly scheduled opportunity is moved or cancelled due to holidays.

# Urban Boatbuilders, Inc. Volunteer Release Agreement

In consideration of participating in the activities of **Urban Boatbuilders, Inc.** and for other good and valuable consideration, I hereby agree to release and discharge from liability arising from negligence **Urban Boatbuilders, Inc.** and its owners, directors, officers, employees, agents, volunteers, participants and all other persons or entities acting for them (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Releasees") on behalf of myself and my children, parents, heirs, assigns, personal representative and estate, and also agree as follows:

1. I acknowledge that participating in the activities of the **Urban Boatbuilders, Inc.** involves known and unanticipated risks which could result in physical or emotional injury, paralysis or permanent disability, death and property damage. Risks include, but are not limited to physical injury from the operation of power and hand tools; medical conditions resulting from physical activity; and damaged clothing and/or other property. I understand that such risks simply cannot be eliminated, despite the use of safety equipment, without jeopardizing the essential qualities of the activity.
2. I expressly accept and assume all of the risks inherent in this activity or that might have been caused by the negligence of the Releasees. My participation in this activity is purely voluntary and I elect to participate despite the risks. In addition, if at any time I believe that event conditions are unsafe or that I am unable to participate due to physical or medical conditions, then I will immediately discontinue participation.
3. I hereby voluntarily release, forever discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Releasees from and all claims, demands, or causes of action which are in any way connected with my participation in this activity, or my use of their equipment or facilities, arising from negligence. This release does not apply to claims arising from intentional conduct. Should Releasees or anyone acting on their behalf be required to incur attorney's fees and costs to enforce this agreement, I agree to indemnify and hold them harmless for all such fees and costs.
4. I represent that I have adequate insurance to cover any injury or damage I may suffer or cause while participating in this activity, or else I agree to bear the costs of such injury or damage myself. I further represent that I have no medical or physical condition which would interfere with my safety in this activity, or else I am willing to assume – and bear the costs of – all risks that may be created, directly or indirectly, by any such condition.
5. In the event that I file a lawsuit, I agree to do so solely in the state where Releasees facility is located, and I further agree that the substantive law of that state will apply.
6. I agree that if any portion of this agreement is found to be void or unenforceable, the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

**By signing this document, I agree that if I am hurt or my property is damaged during my participation in this activity, that I may be found by a court of law to have waived my right to maintain a lawsuit against the parties being released on the basis for any claim of negligence.**

I have had sufficient time to read this entire document and, should I choose to do so, consult with legal counsel prior to signing. Also, I understand that this activity might not be made available to me if I were to choose not to sign this release, and agree that the opportunity to participate in return for the execution of this release is a reasonable bargain. **I have read and understood this document and I agree to be bound by its terms.**

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(please write clearly) MM/DD/YYYY

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
MM/DD/YYYY



## Volunteer Acknowledgement & Registration

Volunteer's First and Last Name (please write clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer (if applicable)** - Many employers have matching contributions for volunteer hours and directly support organizations for which their employees volunteer. We will not contact your employer on your behalf without your consent.

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

By registering your information with us you agree to release Urban Boatbuilders from all liability during Urban Boatbuilders sponsored events and activities. You also agree to allow Urban Boatbuilders to take photos and videos for promotional purposes, and to be added to our mailing lists.

By signing below, I grant to Urban Boatbuilders, its representatives and employees the right to take photographs of me and my property in connection with volunteering, programs, and events. I authorize Urban Boatbuilders, its assigns and transferees to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically. I agree that Urban Boatbuilders may use such photographs of me with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and Web content. **Check here only if you do NOT give permission** to take, use, and publish pictures

I certify that I have received and reviewed the Urban Boatbuilders Volunteer Handbook and agree to follow the standards as presented at all times during service with Urban Boatbuilders. I understand that by signing this statement of receipt as required, I am indicating that I have read the entire handbook and understand its contents and their implications for me as a volunteer at Urban Boatbuilders. I certify that all questions and concerns about its contents have been addressed by Urban Boatbuilders staff, if asked. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

Volunteer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

MM/DD/YYYY

*Please sign and return completed form to Urban Boatbuilders before volunteering:  
2288 University Avenue West, Saint Paul, MN 55114*