

American Cancer Society®

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network℠

Volunteer Welcome Guide

cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345

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The mission of the American Cancer Society is to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

Our vision is to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.

Welcome to the American Cancer Society® and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network℠.

This guide is your entry point to understanding our mission and the many ways YOU can help make our lifesaving work possible.

Volunteers power our mission. We feel their impact in every corner of our work. Today, over 1.3 million volunteers move our mission forward annually, providing a wide range of support that ripples across the lives of people with cancer in communities nationwide and around the world.

We envision a world where every ACS volunteer and their staff partners are empowered, equipped, and united to boldly achieve our organizational goals – working together to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.

Volunteer

An **American Cancer Society** volunteer is someone who generously gives their time, talent, treasure, and/or voice to further our vision of ending cancer as we know it, for everyone.



We could not do this without YOU.

- 1.3 million volunteers
- 99% of our total workforce
- $612 million annual value
- YOU are the human engine driving our mission forward.

With YOU supporting our work, we:

- Launch breakthrough research
- Create empowering resources
- Improve lives of people facing cancer
- Drive policy change through our advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN.

What we do

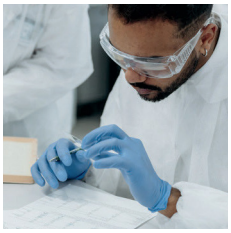
The American Cancer Society is working to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. And since cancer doesn't affect everyone equally, we are working to ensure everyone can have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

We work to reduce the burden of cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. Volunteers are at the heart of every effort, elevating patient voices to drive policy change, enabling lifesaving research, and offering hands-on programs to support people facing cancer.



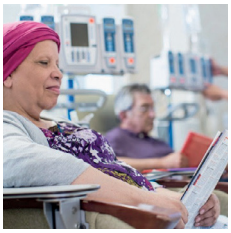
Advocacy

By activating grassroots volunteers nationwide, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network℠ (ACS CAN) fights cancer in city halls, statehouses, and Congress by elevating the patient voice to advance policy change.



Discovery

Thanks to groundbreaking research and transformative discoveries, we are saving more lives than ever before. Our research studies span the cancer continuum to find new ways to treat all types of cancer. Volunteers can support this work by serving as ambassadors for our VOICES of Black Women study or grant peer reviewers.



Patient Support

The American Cancer Society works to ensure no one has to feel alone at any point on their cancer journey, from diagnosis to survivorship. Our volunteers help drive people to cancer treatment, support patients and caregivers staying at our Hope Lodge® communities, and empower people impacted by cancer with information and resources through our patient navigation program.

Who we are

At the American Cancer Society, these core values guide our way forward.

Integrity

We work with **integrity** and are driven by truth, ethics, and fact of science.

Determination

We demonstrate **determination**, relentlessly pursuing a world without cancer.

Diversity

We focus on **diversity**, striving for equity through inclusion and respect.

Compassion

We support people touched by cancer with **compassion** and empathy.

Courage

Undeterred by challenges, we display incredible **courage** and are bold in our actions.



Where do you fit in?

There's a place for YOU in our mission.

Advocacy (ACS CAN)

State lead ambassadors: Lead grassroots efforts in your state.

Legislative ambassadors: Build relationships with elected officials.

Online action takers: Raise your voice online to draw attention to urgent issues.

Patient Support

Road To Recovery® drivers: Give someone facing cancer a ride to treatment.

Hope Lodge® meal volunteers: Prepare and/or help serve meals for guests.

ACS CARES®: Offer support in our virtual community.

Research

VOICES ambassadors: Help advance diverse representation in research.

Grant peer reviewers: Assist in selecting which research studies get funded.

Ready to get involved?

Visit cancer.org/volunteer go learn more about opportunities to help us improve the lives of people facing cancer and their families.



Our history

The American Cancer Society was founded in 1913 by 10 doctors and 5 philanthropists in New York City. It was originally called the American Society for the Control of Cancer (ASCC). At that time, a cancer diagnosis meant near certain death. The disease was rarely mentioned in public, as it only triggered fear, anxiety, and denial. Doctors sometimes did not tell their patients they had cancer, and patients often did not tell their friends and families that they had been diagnosed with it.

As the organization's very first volunteers, the ASCC's founders knew they had to raise public awareness about cancer if progress was to be made against this disease. Despite the enormity of their task, our founders and their colleagues began writing articles for popular magazines and professional journals; publishing Campaign Notes, a monthly bulletin with cancer information; and recruiting doctors throughout the country to help educate the public.

It was in these early years that the organization first used its now-iconic Sword of Hope symbol, which today is part of our logo. The sword came from a 1928 nationwide poster contest sponsored by the ASCC and the New York City Cancer Committee. George E. Durant of Brooklyn won the contest, receiving a first prize of $500. He selected the sword to express the crusading spirit of the cancer control movement.

Sword of Hope

Today, the Sword of Hope continues to represent our relentless fight against cancer. The red twin-serpents around the base of the sword symbolize the balance between partnership in advocacy and medicine/science in health and healing. This iconic image remains a lasting symbol of courage in the pursuit of protecting life.





The Women's Field Army

In 1936, Marjorie G. Illig, an ASCC field representative and chair of the General Federation of Women's Clubs Committee on Public Health, made an extraordinary suggestion. She proposed creating a legion of volunteers whose sole purpose was to wage war on cancer. The Women's Field Army, as this organization came to be called, was an enormous success. Its recruits donned khaki uniforms, complete with insignia of rank and achievement, and went out into the streets to raise money and educate the public. In 1935, there were 15,000 people active in cancer control throughout the United States. At the close of 1938, there were about 10 times that number. More than anything else, it was the Women's Field Army that moved the ASCC to the forefront of voluntary health organizations.

110+ Years of Wins Against Cancer

The American Cancer Society has led some of the most significant wins against cancer in the last century. By funding and conducting research, we have helped create a world where cancer is detected earlier, where fewer people smoke, and where more people survive cancer. Our advocacy arm has advocated for increased access to health care and influenced some of the most momentous health legislation in history. Serving communities in more than 75% of ZIP codes in the US, our work reaches people facing all types of cancer, wherever they may be. We provide around-the-clock support to people facing cancer and their caregivers, offering the latest evidence-based information and ensuring no one has to face cancer alone.



Philanthropist, Mary Lasker

New directions

In 1945, the ASCC was reorganized as the American Cancer Society. It was the beginning of a new era for the organization. World War II was over, the single greatest threat to modern democracy had been defeated, and the nation could at last focus its attention on the public health enemy at home. Many believed it was time for another bold move.

In 1946, philanthropist Mary Lasker and her colleagues met this challenge, helping to raise more than $4 million for the American Cancer Society – $1 million of which was used to establish and fund the organization's groundbreaking research program. With the aid and assistance of dedicated volunteers like Lasker and many others, our research program began to bear fruit. In 1947, we also began our renowned Cancer Signals campaign, a public education effort about the signs and symptoms of cancer.

Making progress

Around the same time the Cancer Signals campaign began, Dr. Sidney Farber, one of our first research grantees, achieved the first temporary cancer remission in a child with acute leukemia using the drug aminopterin, thus opening the modern era of using chemotherapy for cancer treatment. This was just the beginning of the American Cancer Society's support of scientists early in their careers, propelling them to make remarkable advances in understanding and treating cancer.

American Cancer Society-funded researchers have contributed to nearly every major cancer research breakthrough we've seen in the more than 70 years since our research program began. They've helped establish the link between smoking and cancer, demonstrated the effectiveness of the Pap test, developed cancer-fighting drugs and biological response modifiers such as interferon, dramatically increased the cure rate for childhood leukemia, proven the safety and effectiveness of mammography in detecting breast cancer, and so much more.

Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has invested more than $5.6 billion in research, recognizing and providing funding for 53 researchers whose work went on to win the Nobel Prize.



Expanding our reach

In the 1960s and 70s, we began to expand our reach as an organization, working even harder to involve all sectors in our efforts to fight back against cancer. In the 1960s, our organization was instrumental in the development of the Surgeon General's report on the link between smoking and cancer, when early American Cancer Society-sponsored studies confirmed the connection. This upheaval in the perception of smoking laid the groundwork for tobacco control progress – and for the many lives it has saved – that continues today. With the development of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the American Cancer Society also had to adapt to a new role – that of filling in the gaps of the federal government's focus in areas such as cancer prevention and education. Likewise, as National Institutes of Health funding for young investigators began to diminish over the years, we have allocated more research grants to that generation, helping promising young medical researchers enter the cancer field. Today, the American Cancer Society is a global leader in the fight against cancer, integrating advocacy, discovery, and direct patient support to measurably improve the lives of people facing cancer and their families.

Thanks in part to our work, there are more than 18 million people alive in the United States alone who have survived cancer. In addition, the cancer death rate is down 34% since 1991. This equates to more than 4.8 million lives saved between 1991 and 2025 (the most recent year for which statistics are available). And with your support, we will continue advancing our lifesaving mission.

National Cancer Act of 1971

Our advocacy efforts later contributed to the passage of the National Cancer Act in 1971, signed by President Nixon, which granted special funds and authority to expand the National Cancer Institute and revolutionized the war on cancer.

National Cancer Information Center

In 1975, ACS established the **National Cancer Information Center** to provide 24/7 support via a cancer helpline at **1-800-227-2345**.

Volunteer tip: Create a contact record in your phone with our 1-800 number and cancer.org website so you can easily share with people who need support.

Visit **cancer.org/aboutus** for more information.

Our volunteer-staff partnership

You are critical to our success at every level. The ACS volunteer-staff partnership is more than just a relationship; it's a culture of mutual respect and a shared mission. As part of the volunteer-staff partnership, team members and volunteers have different but equally responsible roles and responsibilities, and each party agrees to the same duties, values, and expectations, so together we can work to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.

Components of our partnership

Relationships

Trust, respect and honesty, enjoyment, transparency, flexibility, interest, and knowledge about each other, passion for the mission, valuing the individual, and celebrating diversity

Recruitment

Right fit for the right role, skills and abilities, realistic expectations, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, meaningful work, passion

Training & Support

Onboarding and orientation, required training, policies, rules, boundaries, and non-negotiables, American Cancer Society knowledge, resources and partners, empowerment, and preparedness

Accountability

Goals of event or project, impact of success on the big picture; policies, rules, boundaries, and non-negotiables; timelines and benchmarks, outlines of roles and responsibilities

Communication

Check-ins, preferred method and frequency of contact, feedback, volunteer communication with the public, media, and other organizations. Updates on policies, projects, etc.

Retention

Growth opportunities, appreciation and value, learning opportunities, career path, role satisfaction

Recognition

Feedback, meaningful thanks, award nomination, appreciation and value, value to the organization



Volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization.

Code of Conduct

Just as we hold each other accountable to the volunteer-staff partnership, we also hold each other accountable to our Code of Conduct.

All volunteers shall abide by and conform to these professional standards:

1. Volunteers shall act honestly and ethically while performing their volunteer duties.
2. Volunteers shall treat all American Cancer Society employees, volunteers, and community members with respect, courtesy, and dignity.
3. Volunteers shall not discriminate and shall be respectful of national, cultural, and political differences.
4. Volunteers shall not harass, bully, or mistreat staff or other volunteers.
5. Volunteers shall obey all applicable local, state, and federal laws, while acting on behalf of the American Cancer Society, including all laws and regulations that govern appropriate conduct in the workplace.
6. Volunteers shall deter wrongdoing and ensure accountability for adherence to the Code of Conduct.
7. Volunteers shall assist and cooperate with all American Cancer Society investigations.
8. Volunteers are expected to engage thoughtfully and responsibly in all online interactions where their affiliation with the American Cancer Society or the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is apparent. Reference our Social Media Policy and Code of Ethics for further guidelines.
9. Volunteers shall report violations or suspected violations of the Code of Conduct. Violations should be reported to the assigned staff partner, their manager, or VolunteerEngagement@cancer.org.
10. Volunteers shall seek assistance if they have questions about any volunteer guidelines, including the Code of Conduct.
11. If a staff member or volunteer has any questions or concerns about the Code of Conduct or wishes to file a formal complaint, they may contact VolunteerEngagement@cancer.org, their local staff partner, and/or the ACS executive vice president for their area.

Mutual respect

The American Cancer Society is committed to an environment of mutual respect and a valuing and celebrating of differences. Diversity is a process of valuing differences in people through actions. These differences include race, ethnicity, gender identity, physical ability, sexual orientation, economic status, and culture. Diversity strengthens our mission-driven programs and services developed by our volunteers and staff, as well as our public perception and our interpersonal and organizational activities. Creating an inclusive environment where all people are appreciated and have opportunities to give and learn will prepare our greatest asset – our people – to continue meeting and exceeding our lifesaving goals in the future.

Good stewardship

Serving in a volunteer position requires good judgment and management of reasonable risks. All volunteers will be given a general company orientation and specific training to understand and manage the risks in carrying out their specific jobs. Volunteers will be required to comply with company policy and to conduct American Cancer Society business at the direction of the organization and while performing their volunteer duties. This will help minimize the risk of liability to the American Cancer Society and reduce the risk of injury (physical or economic) to the volunteer and the people the volunteer associates with or attempts to assist.



Eligibility to volunteer

The American Cancer Society does not under any circumstances accept or engage volunteers who have committed crimes of theft, violence, or dishonesty, or who have financial or sex-related offenses. Volunteers with a criminal record including these offenses are not eligible to serve.

Please click **here** to view the full Volunteer Code of Conduct.

American Cancer Society volunteer activities with inherent risks include the transportation of cancer patients; interacting with youth; organizing fundraising events (athletic or social); assisting ACS team members in carrying out office duties; and serving in a governance role, on a committee, or in a leadership role. We offer specific company procedures and manuals to guide the volunteer in conducting these activities in a safe manner.

The American Cancer Society indemnifies its volunteers against liability incurred while performing their volunteer duties conducted at the request of the organization. The American Cancer Society purchases and maintains insurance policies, wherein volunteers are additional insureds, to provide the financial ability to fully indemnify, defend, and settle any claims of liability.

Discrimination or harassment

No volunteer or employee, vendor, or contractor, may be harassed or otherwise discriminated against on the basis of gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use

Business-related activities must be conducted free from the influence of alcohol and illegal drugs. In addition, these substances may not be possessed or distributed on American Cancer Society premises. During business functions where alcohol is served, volunteers and employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

Use of tobacco or e-cigarettes is prohibited on American Cancer Society premises, in American Cancer Society-owned or operated vehicles, at American Cancer Society functions, and while representing the organization at any time or function.

Attendance and punctuality

The American Cancer Society requests volunteers and staff be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled volunteer activities. While the organization will attempt to be flexible in all cases, volunteers are expected to notify a staff member if they will be absent or late, so arrangements can be made for handling their responsibilities.

Reimbursement of expenses

The basic premise of volunteerism is that individuals serve with no expectation of monetary gain. It is not expected however, that a volunteer suffer financial hardship arising from their involvement with American Cancer Society activities. Reimbursement of travel expenses to select business functions is outlined in the ACS Travel and Expense Policy. A volunteer may prefer to report such expenses as a charitable contribution to the American Cancer Society for tax purposes.

Data & privacy

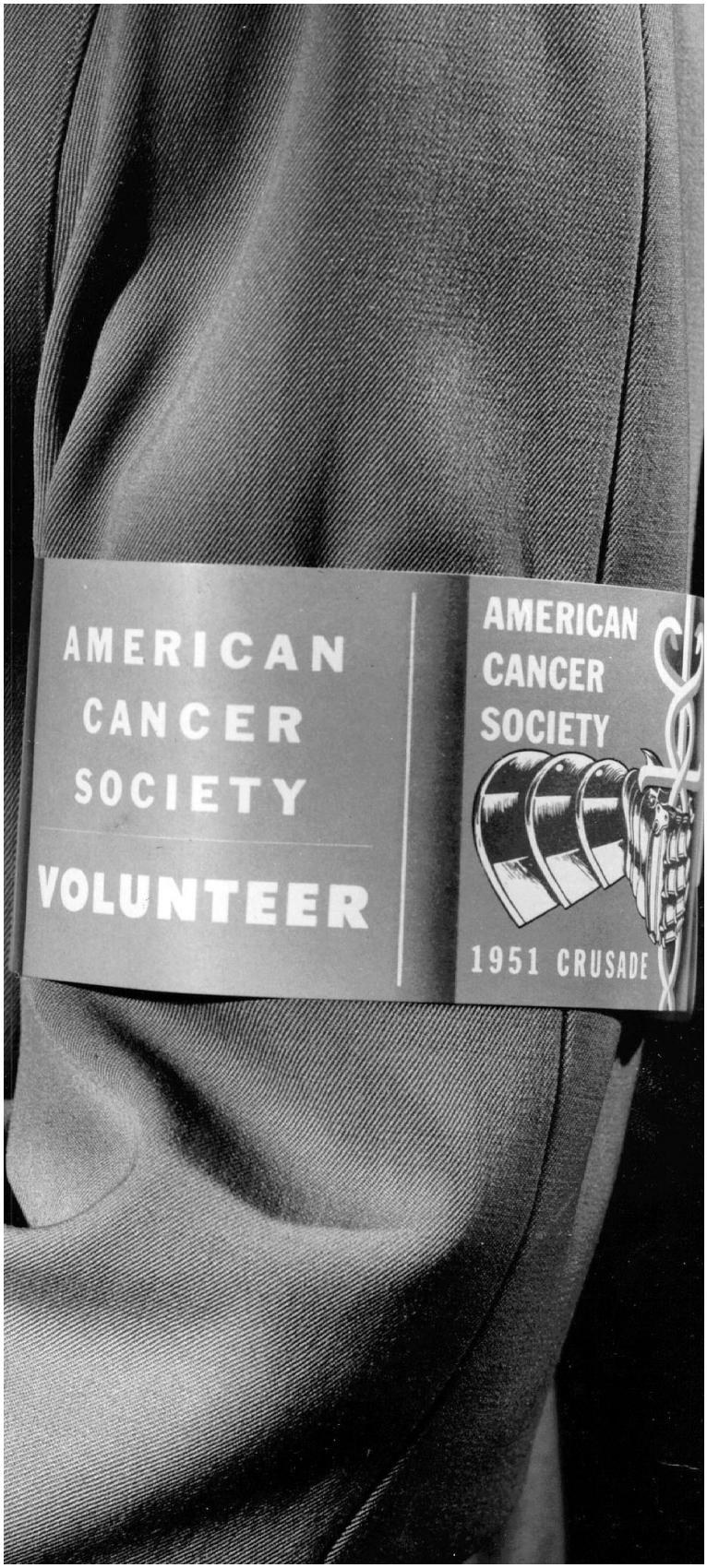
Privacy

The American Cancer Society is committed to protecting the privacy of all our constituents.

People with cancer, caregivers, donors, health care providers, and others across the country and the world provide information to us, and they do so with the expectation that we will protect their data. As an American Cancer Society volunteer, you play a critical role in our efforts to ensure that we meet the expectations of our constituents and our obligations under privacy laws and regulations.

Through your volunteer service to the American Cancer Society, you may come into contact with sensitive personal information about constituents, including patients, donors, and event participants. It is important that you understand how to protect this information. To assist you, we have developed an on-demand Privacy Training to educate you on the importance of privacy and American Cancer Society policies and guidelines.

Below are some highlights of American Cancer Society privacy guidelines. Please review these guidelines carefully and make certain that you follow them as you collect, use, and share constituent information.





Constituent information is Confidential.

All constituent information is confidential and must be safeguarded, and the type of personal information you may have access to as a volunteer depends on your volunteer role. For example, in the context of our events, we collect limited personal information from participants such as contact information and relationship to cancer. This information is useful for event purposes and helps us let participants know about special activities for caregivers and survivors. In connection with our patient support programs, we may collect more sensitive or detailed information such as cancer diagnosis or treatment in order to provide appropriate assistance and support to patients and caregivers..

You may only use and share constituent information to fulfill your volunteer role. And you should always limit your use and disclosure of information to the "minimum necessary amount" that you actually require to accomplish your task.

Cancer stories are very powerful. And we encourage you to share your own story about how cancer may have touched your life. However, it is up to each individual whether to share their story with others, including status as a cancer survivor.

As an American Cancer Society volunteer, it is never appropriate to share another person's story or survivorship status, even informally, without their express permission.

Donor privacy

Protecting the privacy of our donors is also critically important to the American Cancer Society.

It is common to recognize the generosity of donors who have helped to organize or support an event. Prior to any public disclosure, we request that you get permission from the donor. Do not announce donation amounts unless you have permission from the donor. Some donors may wish to remain anonymous, and you must honor such a request.

Any financial information of donors, including paper checks or credit/debit card numbers, require extra protection due to the risk of identity theft. You must strictly adhere to American Cancer Society policies for the collection and handling of such information and report any compromise or misuse of such information. Additionally, donor information should not be entered into any online platform, including AI tools, unless specifically authorized by the American Cancer Society. Be sure to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding these guidelines with your ACS partner.

American Cancer Society proprietary information

American Cancer Society constituent, donor, and volunteer lists are confidential and proprietary. You may only use, collect, and share this proprietary information as it relates to your volunteer duties. Any other use is prohibited.

Use care with conversations

You should always use the utmost care whenever you engage in conversations with constituents that may include a discussion of health or other personal information. Take simple steps such as avoiding conversations in front or other people or in public places, lowering your voice, and not using full names to help protect privacy. Be aware of your surroundings and take whatever reasonable precautions you believe are appropriate to keep the information you are discussing confidential. You should not record calls or use AI to transcribe conversations or take notes, unless the technology is first approved by the American Cancer Society AND the constituent consents.

Use care with messages

Use caution when you leave a message on a constituent's voicemail, since you do not know who may hear the message.
If you must leave a message, limit it to your name, your affiliation with the American Cancer Society, and your contact information, and ask for the constituent to return your call. Do not mention the specific purpose of the call on your "first try."

Use data securely

When sharing information, follow simple steps to maximize security of transmission. For instance, when mailing documents, use a method that tracks delivery and write the word "confidential" on the outside of the envelope.

Whenever possible, do not send sensitive information over the internet. Both email and text messaging are generally unsecured. If you must transmit sensitive data over the internet, use encryption. Many email programs offer the ability to encrypt messages. Check the "TO" line/number to make sure you have the correct email address/digits and you are sending the information to the correct person or people. Never include any personal information in the subject line.

Protect your files

Protect your paper and electronic files containing personal constituent information by limiting access. Follow these steps to help secure your files:

- Keep personal information in locked drawers or cabinets, or out of sight when not in use.
- Carefully secure files when carrying them in your car, to and from meetings, or to American Cancer Society events.
- Save electronic files on a password-protected drive using passwords that are not easily guessed.
- Avoid or minimize copies, and protect the copies in the same manner as originals.
- Destroy (shred or delete) confidential documents once you have finished using them.



Use good computer and mobile device security practices

If possible, avoid storing American Cancer Society data on non-ACS equipment. If you access constituent information on your smartphone and/or tablet, please password-protect your device. If you use a personal computer to access American Cancer Society data, use common computer security measures to safeguard that information and delete all data once no longer needed. Here are a few basic tips:

- Use password protection – don't share your password, don't write it down, and avoid "common" passwords such as your name.
- When you step away from your device, make sure to log off.
- Be careful with files you download from the internet, since the files may contain a virus. Only download what you trust.
- Keep your software up to date, particularly your operating system and antivirus software.

Report suspected privacy incidents ASAP

Privacy breaches can be disastrous to both individuals and the American Cancer Society. Reporting incidents helps to minimize risk and comply with legal requirements. It also permits individuals the opportunity to take action quickly to reduce any potential harm to them.

Report any situation or conduct you believe violates an applicable privacy law, regulation, or our privacy policy. You do not need to know the exact law or requirement, or be certain a violation has or will occur. When in doubt, the better course of action is to report. Let us know about:

- Lost or stolen electronic devices such as laptops, smartphones, or portable devices if they contain personal information.
- Lost or stolen documents, checks, credit/debit card receipts, or other files that contain personal health or account information.
- Emails or text messages or faxes sent to the wrong person or people.

Report privacy incidents or concerns to your ACS partner, your local or regional office, or contact the American Cancer Society's anonymous hotline at **1-800-539-7202**.

Visit **cancer.org/privacy** to view the American Cancer Society's privacy policy.



Volunteer resources

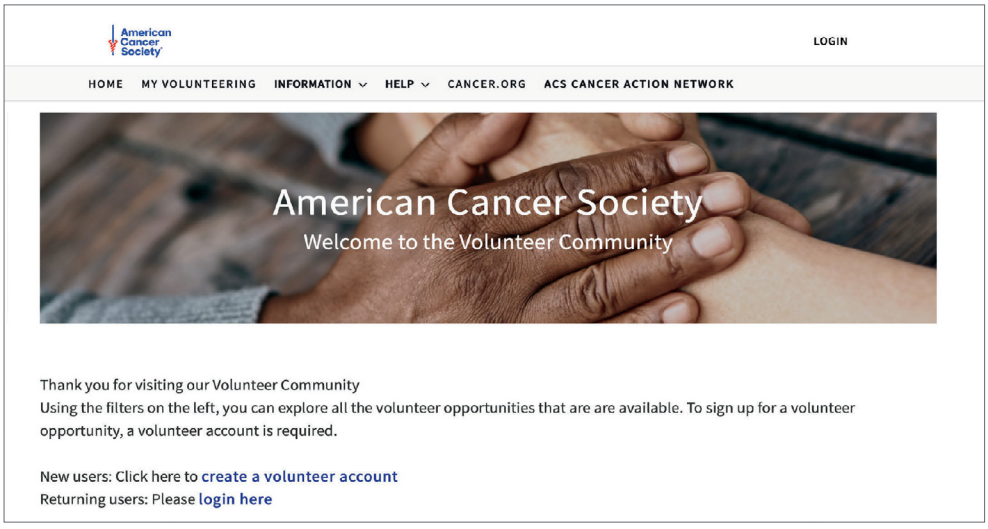
The Volunteer Community is an online portal that allows volunteers to learn more about the American Cancer Society, search and sign up for available volunteer roles, and complete online training and compliance requirements for the roles they select.

Visit **volunteercommunity.cancer.org** to access your volunteer dashboard and sign up for volunteer opportunities.

What can volunteers do in the Volunteer Community?

Volunteers are able to:

- Search for opportunities using filters for geography, date, program type, and more. They can create a Society Account (or use their existing Society Account) to sign up for opportunities.
- Immediately access and begin required training upon sign up.
- Share opportunities available in their community with family and friends.



Volunteer Tip:

The Volunteer Support Team is here for you! Contact us if you have any problems accessing your dashboard, completing trainings, or getting started in your role. Contact Us at: **acsvolunteercare@cancer.org**, **800.227.2345** or start a live chat at **cancer.org**.



Helpful resources & links

1. General Volunteer Information

- The Volunteer Community
- ACS Volunteer Website
- ACS CAN Volunteer Website
- Dollars for Doers: Volunteer Grants

2. General Cancer & Mission Information

- All About Cancer
- ACS Patient Programs & Services
- ACS Research Programs
- National Cancer Information Center Cancer Helpline: **800.227.2345** or Live Chat
- Local Resources

3. Policies & Procedures

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- American Cancer Society Code of Ethics
- American Cancer Society Conflict of Interest
- Social Media Policy
- Policies & Procedures

4. Brand & Marketing Assets

- Explore Brand Resources
- Canva: Customizable Branded Templates*
- Brand Central: Digital & Print Resources*

5. Social Media & Story Telling

- YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Cancer Connections

6. Program Specific

- ACS Community Fundraising Resources
- ACS CAN Volunteer Resources
- ACS CAN Every Action
- Round Trip (For Road To Recovery® drivers)*
- ACS CARES® App*
- American Cancer Society Hope Lodge®
- Health Equity Ambassador Volunteer Resources

*Requires completion of volunteer onboarding, approval of any content created, and/or an ACS login to secure access. Chat with your staff partner or call **800.227.2345** for more information.

American Cancer Society®

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network℠

"I feel deeply satisfied in this volunteer role because it allows me to contribute meaningfully to a cause I care about, while building genuine connections with others. The leadership is supportive, the mission is clear, and I feel valued for both my time and perspective."

Area Board Member

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