



Partnership Agreement – Attachment #2 Sweat Equity Policies and Procedures

(updated 01/2022)

“Sweat Equity” is a core tenant of the Habitat ministry. It refers to the hands-on involvement of the prospective homebuyer and his or her family in the construction of their assigned home, as well as other Habitat homes, the ReStore, and other projects. When performing sweat equity, the homebuyer partner has an opportunity to invest physically and emotionally in the mission of Habitat.

Sweat equity is an exciting cornerstone of the Habitat ministry, and it is designed to meet these three important goals:

- 1. Partnership:** Sweat equity provides meaningful interaction among Partner Families, affiliate staff, volunteers and the community.
- 2. Pride in Homeownership:** Working sweat equity hours, helps partner families begin the transition to homeownership. Habitat offers a hand up, not a handout. Partner families can feel good about the work they have invested to build their own home.
- 3. Development of skills and knowledge:** On the build site, Partner Families and household members gain a real understanding of the construction of their home and the maintenance issues they may face after occupancy. Additionally, Partner Families develop or expand financial literacy and other skills necessary for becoming a successful homeowner through participation in education programs made available through LAHFH and other community partners.

In compliance with ADA guidelines, if the Partner Family has a disability, Habitat for Humanity will work with that individual to establish reasonable accommodations for completing sweat equity requirements, such as allowing work to be done in the affiliate office or ReStore, allowing a family member or friend to complete sweat equity hours on behalf of the Partner Family, and/or allowing a higher number of hours to be donated by family and friends.

Sweat equity is a programmatic requirement of the Habitat program. Sweat equity hours have no monetary value and are in no way considered a down payment toward the home or a contribution toward the affiliate. Should a prospective homebuyer be deselected or choose to withdraw from the program, no monetary compensation will be given for sweat equity hours.

1.1 Sweat-equity hours

LAHFH requires each Partner Family to complete a **minimum of 250-500 hours** as a household. All hours must be completed and verified by the Habitat office before we can allow you to purchase and occupy a Habitat home.

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Sweat equity requirements will be based on each Partner Family’s composition and the build year. See the table below.

2022 Build Requirements: (10-12 months)	
1 Adult¹ living in the household (avg of 21-25 hrs/month)	
Total Hours	250
Friends and Family (donated hours)	Up to 100
Construction (on a build site)	Min. 100
Other Hours (ReStore, Events, Classes, Office, etc.)	~50
2 Adults¹ living in the household² (avg of 34-40 hrs/month)	
Total Hours	400
Friends and Family (donated hours)	Up to 50
Construction (on a build site)	Min. 200
Other Hours (ReStore, Events, Classes, Office, etc.)	~150
3+ Adults¹ living in the household² (avg of 38-45 hrs/month)	
Total Hours	450
Friends and Family (donated hours)	Up to 50
Construction (on a build site)	Min. 225
Other Hours (ReStore, Events, Classes, Office, etc.)	~175

2023 Build Requirements: (20-24 months)	
1 Adult¹ living in the household (avg of 13-15 hrs/month)	
Total Hours	300
Friends and Family (donated hours)	Up to 125
Construction (on a build site)	Min. 100
Other Hours (ReStore, Events, Classes, Office, etc.)	~75
2 Adults¹ living in the household² (avg of 21-25 hrs/month)	
Total Hours	500
Friends and Family (donated hours)	Up to 100
Construction (on a build site)	Min. 200
Other Hours (ReStore, Events, Classes, Office, etc.)	~200

¹ Adult is defined as any person 18 years of age or older, who is expecting to live in the completed house for 3+ years.

² LAHFH has the flexibility to make exceptions to the sweat equity requirements for Partner Families with 2 or more adults living in the household, depending on the age and capabilities of the adults.

2023 Build Requirements:	
3+ Adults³ living in the household⁴ (avg of 23-28 hrs/month)	
Total Hours	550
Friends and Family (donated hours)	Up to 100
Construction (on a build site)	Min. 225
Other Hours (ReStore, Events, Classes, Office, etc.)	~225

1.2 Expectations of Partner Families

Sweat Equity is one of the most vital elements of the Habitat ministry and is an excellent means for building relationships between the Partner Family and the community.

- LAHFH expects Partner Families to positively represent our organization when completing the Sweat Equity requirements.
 - To achieve this, Partner Families are expected to be *more* responsible, *more* focused, *more* hardworking, and *more* enthusiastic in their work than other LAHFH volunteers.
- Each Partner Family member completing Sweat Equity hours must interact in positive ways with volunteers and contributors.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: Each Partner Family is required to complete a minimum of 12 hours per month, until your house is completed, even if you have your minimum hours finished according to the tables above. Some months will need to have more than 12 hours in order for you to meet the requirements.

1.3 Sweat-equity procedures

When do hours begin?

Sweat Equity hours begin to be earned and recorded after you have been approved for the program and have accepted the terms of partnership with Habitat.

Who may participate in helping you complete Sweat Equity hours?

Members of your household (age 16 or older) and your family and friends.

How are Sweat Equity Hours Earned?

- Construction work on your Habitat home

³ Adult is defined as any person 18 years of age or older, who is expecting to live in the completed house for 3+ years.

⁴ LAHFH has the flexibility to make exceptions to the sweat equity requirements for Partner Families with 2 or more adults living in the household, depending on the age and capabilities of the adults.

- Construction work on other Habitat homes
- Attendance at required homebuyer education classes
- Attendance at optional homebuyer education classes (requires approval of Habitat staff)
- Work in Habitat ReStore or office
- Other events and projects provided by LAHFH staff

Target Date for Completion of Hours

The goal of partnership is for you to complete all the required sweat equity hours by the time construction is finished on your home, so you can take occupancy as soon as possible.

Tracking and Submitting Hours

- Sweat Equity Electronic Logs- The link to record sweat equity hours electronically, is on our website at this link: www.lakeagassizhabitat.org/partnerfamily. This link will be provided at all build sites, classes, and at the ReStore sign-in sheets, so you can log the hours.
 - We have a Google form set up for “Household Members” to record hours
 - Separate Google form is set up for Friends and extended family who are donating hours to the Partner Family.
- The Family Services Coordinator will monitor all sweat equity logs on a weekly basis and send each Partner Family an update. If the Partner Family sees any activities or hours that are missing from that week, they will have the opportunity to submit that information.
- The Family Services Coordinator will sign off on all hours that are recorded electronically.
- Each Partner Family’s progress is reviewed by the mentor and staff and adjustments may be made if needed.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Each Partner Family is responsible to track their own Sweat Equity hours using our electronic tracking system. Any hours not tracked during the month will not count in the total later on. It is recommended that you keep your sweat equity log updated after each Habitat activity.*

Donated Hours (Family and Friends)

- Family and Friends may contribute a maximum of donated hours to your household’s sweat equity requirement. Please see the appropriate table above to see what your maximum number of hours is, based on your family’s composition.
- To be counted, the individual donating the hours must complete the appropriate Google form electronically, during the month that the donation of hours was completed.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: If the Partner Family fails to track their donated hours during that month, the hours will not count towards the Partner Family’s total Sweat Equity requirements.*

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- Requirements for Donated Hours –
 - No more than the maximum hours noted in the chart on this sweat equity policy will be counted towards the PF’s final total.
 - A separate Sweat Equity Log **must** be completed, following the same guidelines as the Partner Family. A verbal declaration will not be sufficient.
 - Sweat Equity contributors may not be recruited at build sites, LAHFH ReStore, or LAHFH activities.
 - In accordance with LAHFH Construction Safety Policy, children under the age of 16 may not contribute to Sweat Equity hours on a build site.
 - In accordance with LAHFH ReStore Policy, children under the age of 13 may only contribute to Sweat Equity hours if they have an adult with them at the LAHFH ReStore.

- Special Circumstances may allow LAHFH to permit additional hours to be completed by extended family and friends. This decision will be made by LAHFH at its discretion, and once made, will be non-negotiable.

1.4 Opportunities to complete Sweat Equity Hours

- Construction
 - **Scheduling-** For Sweat Equity hours completed on LAHFH build sites to be counted, Partner Families must register *in advance* through Volunteer Up! on the LAHFH website or by calling the Volunteer Coordinator at (218) 359-0814 Please note the following guidelines for registering:
 1. Individuals should identify themselves as a Partner Family. Persons donating their hours should specify the Partner Family adult they wish to contribute hours for. There are “Teams/Groups” on Volunteer UP! created for these purposes.
 2. Individuals should specify which day(s) they wish to work and the number of guests they will bring.
 3. A Partner Family may register to work as far in advance as they would like, but not before the schedule is available.
 4. **Everyone must sign up in advance!**
 - **Grounds keeping** – Each Partner Family will be expected to keep their build site cleaned up, pull weeds, and shovel sidewalk snow from the front door to the driveway, so that volunteers, Habitat staff, and sub-contractors can get in and out of the house.

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- LAHFH will be responsible for mowing the properties until the Partner Family takes ownership and LAHFH will hire a snow removal company to clear the driveway.
 - Partner Families are expected to go to their build site on a regular basis and clean up the site, throwing away garbage and scraps, sweeping, picking up nails and other supplies, etc.
 - Partner Families should maintain the yard by pulling weeds before the snow falls.
- **Cancellations-** If a Partner Family, or anyone registered to work hours on behalf of a Partner Family, is unable to work on a day they have registered to work the Partner Family member ***must cancel the reservation as soon as possible***. Cancellation may be done through Volunteer Up! via the LAHFH website or by calling the Volunteer Coordinator.
- **Sweat Equity Logs on site-** Every Partner Family is responsible for submitting their hours electronically at the build site. There will be a reminder in the Volunteer sign-in binder.
 - Partner Families are encouraged to sign in and sign out on the volunteer sign-in sheets as well. This will allow LAHFH staff to cross check with the family's electronic log.
- **Build Site Rules-** Any person wishing to work Sweat Equity on a LAHFH build site, whether member of a Partner Family or working on behalf of a Partner Family, is subject to all LAHFH Safety Policies and must follow all instructions as outlined by the LAHFH Construction Manager and Site Supervisors.
 - All persons must sign in and out at the build site.
 - All persons must be respectful of the other volunteers, other Partner Families, Construction Manager and Crew Leaders.
- **Education hours**
 - Education hours may only be earned by maximum of 2 household members of the Partner Family.
 - For dual applicants, both heads of household **must** attend.
 - For single applicant, head of household **must** attend. A second person from the household (age 17 or older) **may** attend for sweat equity credit.
 - Participants must arrive at education classes on time or notify LAHFH staff in advance.
 - Every Partner Family is responsible for submitting their hours electronically after each class.

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- ReStore/Habitat Office
 - **Scheduling-** For Sweat Equity hours completed in the LAHFH ReStore to be counted, Partner Families must register *in advance* through Volunteer Up! on the LAHFH website or by calling the Volunteer Coordinator at (218) 359-0814. Please note the following guidelines for registering:
 1. Individuals should identify themselves as a Partner Family. Persons donating their hours should specify the Partner Family adult they wish to contribute hours for.
 2. Individuals should specify which day(s) they wish to work and the number of guests they will bring.
 3. A Partner Family may register to work as far in advance as they would like, but not before the schedule is available.
 4. ***Everyone must sign up in advance!***
 - **Cleaning Schedule-** Each Partner Family will be assigned several weeks throughout the year where they will be responsible for coming to the Habitat Office/ReStore and completing the cleaning duties.
 - **Cancellations-** If a Partner Family, or anyone registered to work hours on behalf of a Partner Family, is unable to work on a day they have registered to work the Partner Family member ***must cancel the reservation as soon as possible***. Cancellation may be done through Volunteer Up! via the LAHFH website or by calling the Volunteer Coordinator.
 - **Sweat Equity Logs at LAHFH ReStore-** Every Partner Family is responsible for submitting their hours electronically at the ReStore. There will be a reminder by the Volunteer sign-in binder.
 - Partner Families are encouraged to sign in and sign out on the volunteer sign-in sheets as well. This will allow LAHFH staff to cross check with the family's electronic log.
 - **LAHFH ReStore Rules-** Any person wishing to work Sweat Equity in the LAHFH ReStore, whether member of a Partner Family or working on behalf of a Partner Family, is subject to all LAHFH Safety Policies and must follow all instructions as outlined by the LAHFH ReStore Staff.
 - All persons must sign in and out in the LAHFH ReStore volunteer log.
- Other LAHFH Events & meetings

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- From time to time, Partner Families will be able to earn Sweat Equity for attending or participating at LAHFH meetings or events. Information about such events, including times, dates, places, and additional information, will be made available through the Family Mentors and/or LAHFH Staff. Partner Families will be allowed to sign up for these events on a first-come, first-served basis.

1.5 Sweat-equity break policy

There may be a time when special circumstances (ex. Temporary disability, family illness, death in the immediate family, etc.) may arise that may interfere with the Partner Family's timely completion of Sweat Equity. Partner Families may be allowed to take a *break* from Sweat Equity, with the understanding that the full requirements must still be met prior to occupation.

The decision to allow a break is made on a case-by-case basis by LAHFH at its discretion and once made, is final and non-negotiable.

** IMPORTANT NOTE: It is the policy of LAHFH that all agreements regarding Sweat Equity are made in writing and signed by both LAHFH and the Partner Family. Under no circumstances does a verbal conversation supersede a written agreement. Only written agreements can be documented and therefore honored.*

1.6 Sweat-equity Sanctions

If a Partner Family fails to complete the Sweat Equity requirements in a timely manner according to this policy, the Partner Family risks losing eligibility or possible de-selection for failure to partner. The Partner Family's Sweat Equity progress is monitored by their Family Mentors.

- If the Partner Family is not completing Sweat Equity at a satisfactory rate, LAHFH will advise the Family Mentor of changes to be made. If substantial improvement is not made in the following month, the Family Mentor should determine whether there are barriers other than a lack of interest.
- If after two months the Partner Family has not made satisfactory progress and no measures have been taken by the Partner Family to contact LAHFH about circumstances preventing the Partner Family from working their hours, a meeting to discuss the Partner Family's Sweat Equity will be held with the negligent Partner Family member, the Family Mentor and a LAHFH representative. At this meeting, a Sweat Equity agreement must be made, a probationary period set up, and guidelines established for the Partner Family to avoid de-selection.
- If during the probationary period the Sweat Equity agreement is not honored by the Partner Family, LAHFH will begin the de-selection procedures outlined in Section 7.

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Other causes for intervention include:

- You are repeatedly late, absent or uncooperative with Sweat Equity requirements.
- You are not earning a minimum of 12 hours per month, until your house is completed (even if you have already reached your required household total.)
- You are not keeping track of your Sweat Equity hours and reporting them to Habitat staff each month.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: If at any time a Partner Family finds that there are not enough Sweat Equity opportunities available, they must bring this to the attention of their Family Mentor, who will work with LAHFH to ensure sufficient opportunities have been outlined.*

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