

STUDENTS FOR LIBERTY

VOLUNTEER POLICY HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION

Students For Liberty's (SFL) volunteers are our strongest asset and the reason why we are now active on every inhabited continent. SFL was founded on the principle that volunteers' autonomy is pivotal to our success. SFL has grown significantly since our early days and we have staff on nearly all continents to provide structures for this growth. It is the responsibility of both volunteers and staff to uphold the quality of SFL's work. This document is intended to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making areas of both staff and volunteers, to ensure that SFL maintains its strong brand and impressive growth.

The rest of this document clarifies the different areas of ownership and responsibility between staff and volunteers. It also includes legal aspects that volunteers have to comply to in order to become volunteer for SFL (section 7). If you have a question or if you are unsure about a particular course of action, please contact your regional staffer.

From time to time, it will be necessary for SFL to update this handbook. If that happens, SFL will notify all volunteers of the updated handbook.

2. STAFF

Overview

SFL staff fulfill two key functions for our volunteers: They aim to support and guide student leaders to fulfill **our mission to educate, develop, and empower the next generations of leaders for liberty.**

The primary objective of staff is to serve SFL's mission. While accepting that student leader autonomy is crucial, there are several reasons why our staff sometimes involve themselves in volunteer management:

1. Staff embody institutional knowledge. Nearly all of our staff have been student leaders themselves. They know the region, the history, the connections to relevant stakeholders, and have the experience regarding what programs have worked in the past and which ones have not. They are there to make sure that our student activism is focused on projects that produce the most value for liberty while allowing for experimentation and continuous improvement.
2. Staff have legal liability for the organization.
3. Staff have fiscal responsibility for the organization.
4. Staff exist to intervene when volunteers' behavior is undermining our mission, functioning as a check-and-balance on volunteer activities and vice versa.

Legal Accountability

Legal control and authority of SFL reside in SFL's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors delegate much of the decision making authority and legal accountability to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and by

extension SFL's staff as the principal team that works with the CEO. While as much autonomy is granted as possible to every individual volunteer, staffer, and region within SFL, the organization depends upon a system of checks and balances to ensure compliance with all laws and minimization of liability to ensure the long term success of the organization. While it is incumbent upon every individual within SFL to abide by all laws and minimize liability to the organization, it is not the burden of volunteers to primarily deal with legal issues. Rather, it is principally the responsibility of staff with oversight and accountability to SFL's Board of Directors.

[Guidelines and Policies](#)

SFL has a decade of experience in student organizing. During that time, we have created some policies and useful guidelines that ensure quality, reduce costs, and represent best practices. Staff has to make sure that such guidelines are communicated to volunteers. If you do not receive these documents, please reach out to your regional supervisor:

- [Email Policy](#)
- [Speakers Policies & Contracts](#)
- [Expense and Travel Policies](#)
- [Whistleblower Policy](#)

[Approving expenses and Fiscal Accountability](#)

Regional staff are responsible for approving volunteer expenses. As a volunteer, you must get your expenses approved prior to spending any money if you want to be reimbursed. Similarly, staffer expenses have to be approved by their supervisor. We budget on an annual basis. We cannot spend money we have not accounted for.

Do not escalate your problem to the staffer's supervisor if your planned expenses do not get approved. If you believe you have been treated unfairly, see Section 5. Staffers are responsible for communicating the reimbursement policy to volunteers.

Even though our financials are handled by the legal entity, Students For Liberty, Inc., each region is budgeted separately and aims to sustain its operations with locally raised funds.

All reimbursement request must be submitted within 3 months (90 days) of the expense or before the end of SFL's fiscal year (April 30), whichever is sooner.

[Organization-Wide Planning](#)

The Board of Directors and the CEO work together with the whole organization to establish a strategic vision for the organization as well as maintain and enhance the quality of SFL's brand. Organization-wide goals are set by the staff on an annual basis. Staff gathers all information on our activities and finances, and uses this information to set overall goals for each fiscal year (SFL's fiscal year lasts from the beginning of May

until end of April). These overarching goals translate into regional goals which are set in collaboration with volunteers: especially the regional leadership teams.

Hiring

All decision-making authority regarding hiring, promotions, and compensation of staff at SFL rests in the organization's staff. The Board of Directors has legal authority and responsibility for the organization, but defers management authority and responsibility to the CEO. This means that the CEO is ultimately responsible for all staff decisions at the end of the day. Whenever possible position will be open to everyone.

Communication with Everyone

Our staff provide continuity of historical knowledge, experience, and personal connections. They interact with other regions and learn about best practices of student activism around the world. In that capacity, staffers will approach volunteers on all levels to talk about our operations. They have total discretion in speaking to everyone in the organization.

Removing Volunteers

It is unfair to volunteers to keep people within the leadership who do not fulfill the duties they set themselves. In the past, due to personal relationships or the general unpleasantness of removing someone, non-performing or non-communicating leaders were kept within the leadership. This undermined activities of active volunteers. The student leadership teams are generally responsible for the removal of inactive or counterproductive volunteers. Removing a volunteer is the last course of action and is neither to be approached lightly by staff or volunteers.

However, the staff's role is to uphold the integrity of the organization. To achieve this, staffers, especially regional ones, can also remove volunteers who are not active, do not communicate, or who have harmed the organization through their behavior (for instance by violating the 501(C)3 status, undermining our brand, wasting resources, not communicating, etc.). Staffers have to justify their decisions to volunteers who seek information about the decision, although in some instances, staff will need to take into account the sensitive nature of the situation and protect that person's privacy.

Regional staffers correspond with regional directors about the removal of a coordinator. Regional staffers correspond with the chairperson about removing an executive board member (if an executive board exist in the region). Staff is responsible for providing evidence that a removal is necessary. In case of a conflict between the chairperson and the staffer, the supervisor of the regional staffer functions as a third-party deciding upon the removal of a volunteer.

3. VOLUNTEERS

Leadership structures differ somewhat among regions. Whatever leadership structure there is in your region and the position you have within that, there are certain expectations that apply generally. Each region has a volunteer leadership team (historically these were Executive Boards and more recently most regions are transitioning to Advanced Leadership Teams) who guide the actions of the other leaders in that region and provide necessary region-wide direction and oversight. Universally, these leadership teams are responsible for formulating a strategy within their region and sub-regions; guiding, mentoring and removing other volunteers; proposing new programs and campaigns; and representing the organization to partners and the public. All of these teams have Regional Directors who are responsible for recruiting, selection, and mentorship and oversight of their sub-region. There are usually also leaders assigned to specific capabilities such as communications, events, fundraising, marketing/social media, or academic programs. These capability leaders are chosen because they have a unique set of skills that they can use to further the mission of the region and mentor other students on those topics.

We have always experimented with new structures and positions within our student leadership. Generally, if a volunteer wants to craft their own role, they are encouraged to try it as long as it contributes to our mission and vision. Staff members must be included in this conversation to make sure that we do not create overlapping or unproductive positions.

To best guide the volunteers in the region, this leadership team is responsible for making sure that every volunteer has clearly defined goals outlined in their Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations (RRE) document. It is this team's responsibility to make sure all volunteers complete these documents and continuously engage in a conversation about how to best leverage each leader's passion and skills to fit within the mission of the organization and within the roles of the other leaders on their team. This process may differ among regions but it is ultimately their responsibility to ensure it gets done.

The volunteer handbook applies equally to all SFL leaders, regardless of role.

4. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

[Upholding 501\(c\)3 Status](#)

Our 501(c)3 status is of the greatest importance to SFL. If we were to lose this status, our donors could not receive tax deductions on their donations. This would make fundraising impossible. Therefore, due to the importance of this status, both volunteers and staffers have to make sure that we do not violate the requirements of the status. We cannot and will not engage in partisan or lobbying activities. Our students and staff talk about ideas and can talk about policies. However, SFL as an organization will never endorse or lobby for or against a political party, candidate, or a specific piece of legislation. To provide an example; we can argue against the war on drugs but we cannot lobby on behalf of a specific law in a country. You can be politically active but you cannot use your position in SFL for your political activities. You have to separate

your engagement within SFL from your political activism. Please do not present a position on any given issue as that of SFL.

We highly recommend inserting a “Views expressed my own” line (or similar) into personal social media profiles.

[Uphold SFL’s Brand](#)

We are a tolerant, big-tent classical-liberal/libertarian organization. SFL provides an open forum to discuss ideas which invites input from all areas of libertarian ideas. To achieve our vision of a free society, we have to embrace the better ideas, and we also have to be the better people! You are representing SFL and representing classical liberal ideas. Remember that (and don’t take pictures after 9pm).

There are too many angry libertarians out there and admittedly there is much one can be angry about. However, if we want to succeed in convincing other people that a peaceful and prosperous society is a libertarian society, we have to behave respectfully to everyone, even if they do not reciprocate. Being the friendlier, more reasonable, kinder person has much more impact in convincing others than to win arguments while being impolite, rude, and dismissive of other people’s opinions.

[Fundraising](#)

If you want to have more freedom about your own expenditures, there is one thing volunteers can do: raise money! Again, the more independent and value-producing a region is, the less staff has to guide it and can therefore concentrate more on support. If you want to raise money, please contact your staffers and the Director of Development to come up with a strategy.

Disclose your own fundraising efforts. Fundraising is one of the highest-leveraging activities for SFL. More funds translate into more freedom. However, SFL staff has to know about donors. Student volunteer turnover is high and we have to make sure we maintain long lasting relationships with donors. We have standardized ways to collect donor information. SFL’s staff will not take your donor away. If you have established the relationship, you remain their contact. However, once a volunteer finishes their time with SFL, staff reaches out to the donor to continue the relationship. Staff can help you with pitches, writing reports, proposals, and maintaining donor relationships. Another reason why we need to know about donors is to budget effectively. The organization can get in trouble if we have expenses and income that we cannot account for.

If you as a student leader want to start a local charity in SFL’s name, write first to your regional staffer and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). There are many legal issues involved and you have to talk to SFL first before starting the process.

[Saving Funds](#)

It costs money to make money. It does not cost anything to save money. Every dollar saved is a dollar less we have to raise. Therefore, please always consider how to do things cheaper. Get stuff printed for free at your university, use the bus or train to go to an event, use regional businesses to raise money for your regional conference, stay with a friend if you can to save costs on accommodation, etc. We have to be frugal to use our funds in the most effective ways to support volunteers around the world. If you see any waste or have ideas about how we can run things cheaper, please let us know.

We are a lean organization that is here to enhance freedom in the world. To achieve this, we have to maximize our impact and minimize our expenses. We only finance volunteer activities that pertain to our mission. We are not going to fund the nth student leader attending a regional conference if his or her help is not required. If leaders produce value for SFL, we will support them as much as we can. But if they are only part of SFL because of the perks and not because of our mission and vision, they are in the wrong organization. We cannot tolerate staffers or volunteers who consume our resources without producing value. These resources are needed in the hands of value-producing volunteers.

[Transitioning](#)

Knowledge easily gets lost when a staffer moves on or when volunteers leave us. Please make sure that you look for a successor in time and that you give the person the training and information to succeed. We encourage volunteers to write a transition document for your successor. Your regional director and staffer can help you with this task.

[Protecting Our Data](#)

Do not share our student lists, conference attendees list, or any other extensive student data with outside organizations. Of course, you can connect people but we have to protect the privacy of our students and our worldwide network. **See the non-disclosure agreement below.**

It is important to get consent from those who sign up at our events for SFL to contact them. Our SFL branded sign up sheets have the necessary fields and clauses to do this. Make sure that every time you are collecting contact information, you are doing so properly.

[Communication and E-mail Policy](#)

48 hour rule: Answer your e-mails within at least 48 hours. If you cannot fulfill your duties due to exams or other issues, let your team know.

Please be aware that all communication through Google accounts @studentsforliberty.org (or the regional equivalent, i.e. @eslibertad.org) is owned by Students For Liberty. Therefore, please do not use SFL's

communication platforms for your personal, political, or any other non-SFL related correspondence. Be cognizant about the fact that your calendar and documents are visible to other people in the network.

Feedback

Our staffers and volunteers are often friends. This creates difficulty in providing critical feedback to volunteers or staff. Please keep in mind that we are all here to improve the state of liberty in the world. If you think that a critical piece of feedback is necessary, please go ahead and provide feedback. Give it to staffers, to volunteers, and ask for it yourself. We can only become better as an organization if we each improve individually. Seek help from friends or more experienced volunteers and staffers to figure out how to provide feedback in a way that improves relationships rather than undermining them. Don't forget to provide positive feedback often too!

Respectful Communication

Volunteers and Staff are representatives of SFL at all times. As part of SFL's leadership, you represent SFL online and in person whether you're acting on SFL business or not. If you post an offensive rant about another organization or individual, it will reflect poorly on you and also on SFL. Please do not force us to have an uncomfortable conversation about something that you posted or said in the heat of the moment. We could have written hundreds of pages about things one should not do. However, we select staff and volunteers because we believe that they are capable individuals who will bring about freedom in the world. Enjoy yourself, have fun, learn something, but do this within the confines of appropriate behavior by respecting SFL, volunteers, staff, and everyone else.

5. NON DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

SFL will not engage in or tolerate unlawful discrimination (including any form of unlawful harassment or retaliation) on account of a person's sex, pregnancy, age, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, immigrant status, military status, veteran's status, disability, handicap, atypical heredity cellular or blood trait, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, familial status, domestic partner or civil union status or membership in any other protected group.

SFL will neither engage in nor tolerate sexual or any other form of unlawful harassment.

If a volunteer feels that he or she is treated unfairly by a staffer or another volunteer, the volunteer can make a formal complaint via a written complaint to the Chief Operating Officer (COO). If the individual does not feel comfortable reporting the complaint to the COO, please send it directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If the complaint is about the CEO, please direct it to the Chairperson of the SFL Board of Directors.

Do not take this process lightly! Before you file a written complaint, please talk to the staffer first. Have you considered other options before filing a complaint? Do you know the perspective of him or her on a given event? Are you acting upon assumption and hearsay?

Please follow these steps.

We take every complaint extremely seriously. If we feel that your complaint is unjustified, we will let you know. When filing a complaint:

1. Please state the name of the staffer or volunteer you want to complain about.
2. Please state the date of the incident.
3. Please state your complaint. Provide details about the situation, the behavior of the staffer, and the outcome.
4. What remedy do you seek?
5. Is there something else you would like to say about the incident and the staffer or volunteer?

6. VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have read the “Volunteer Handbook” and that I understand and agree to the following terms and conditions as a Students For Liberty volunteer. I will officially become a SFL volunteer after I have completed my training.

Confidential Information Policy

All individuals in SFL’s leadership are required to agree to the following confidentiality policy:

In the course of performing my duties on behalf of Students For Liberty (“SFL”), I understand that I may, from time to time, be placed in a position of trust and confidence in which I receive or contribute to the creation of confidential and/or proprietary information relative to the operations of SFL. This confidential and/or proprietary information includes, but is not limited to, to the extent not generally known by or readily accessible to the public: Trade secrets, such as SFL’s relationship with other organizations; Business, manufacturing, marketing, legal and accounting methods, policies, plans, procedures, strategies and techniques; Information concerning SFL’s earnings, budget, development and methods for doing business; Research-and-development projects, plans and results; Technical information, such as SFL’s internal operations mechanisms; The names, addresses and telephone numbers of SFL’s employees, vendors and suppliers; Student volunteer and donor lists and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of SFL’s current, former and prospective student volunteers and donor; Pricing, credit and other financial information; Confidential information provided by or about a student volunteer or donor; and any and all other data or information relating to the operations and business of SFL which is not known generally by or readily accessible to the public.

During my position with SFL I understand and agree that:

(a) I must protect this confidential and/or proprietary information and use and/or disclose such information only as necessary to further SFL’s business interests; and I may not use or disclose such confidential and/or

proprietary information for personal gain or for any purpose which does not further and/or which is inconsistent with the business interests of SFL.

(b) In particular, and by way of example only, during my position I understand and agree that:

(i) I should designate/mark as “confidential” any documents, records etc. which contain confidential and/or proprietary information in accordance with instructions given to me by one of my superiors.

(ii) I should secure (in order to limit access to) confidential and/or proprietary information in accordance with instructions given to me by my superiors.

(iii) I should disclose confidential and/or proprietary information internally only to those who have a “need to know” in the course of performing their jobs for SFL.

(iv) I should not discuss confidential and/or proprietary information in public areas where my discussion may be overheard.

(v) I should disclose confidential and/or proprietary information to non-employees and non-volunteers only with the approval of and in accordance with guidelines given to me by SFL’s president or vice president. In some cases, the non-employee/non-volunteer may be required to execute a non-disclosure agreement.

In addition, I understand that upon my separation from SFL, regardless of the reason and whether initiated by SFL or me:

(a) I must return to SFL, retaining no copies, any and all files, records, correspondence, documents, electronic diskettes, computer compact discs, computer and electronic-mail printouts, drawings, specifications, writings and similar items, retaining no copies, which relate to or reflect SFL’s business operations, volunteers and donors, prospective volunteers and donors, employees, suppliers, vendors, etc., regardless of where such items were kept or prepared.

(b) I may not use and/or disclose SFL’s confidential and/or proprietary information at any time, at any place, for any reason.

Conflict of Interest

By accepting a position as a SFL volunteer, I, the undersigned, agree to prioritize the best interests of both SFL’s mission and success as an organization. I will not take actions that are contrary to the best interests of SFL, or in conflict with SFL’s functioning or success. I recognize that SFL encourages volunteers to work with other organizations dedicated to liberty and supports volunteer interests in helping other organizations, but also recognize that any work done for another organization must not conflict with or hinder the success of SFL as an organization. If I am placed in a position that conflicts with the best interests of SFL, I will find a way to prioritize SFL’s interests first even if that means removing myself from the position that conflicts with SFL’s interests.

Use of Image Waiver

I, the undersigned, acknowledge and agree that SFL may use my images, whether on film, video, electronic media or other format, for publicity, marketing and any other purpose which SFL may deem appropriate, and further acknowledge that there will be no compensation from SFL at any time for such use of my image(s). By my signature I declare that I have read, understand and agree with, and intend to be legally bound by, all parts of this Volunteer Policy Handbook.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____