

Volunteer Role Description Template

A simple tool for defining clear, safe, sustainable volunteer roles in any compassion ministry

Clear roles. Healthy boundaries. Faithful service.



Purpose of This Resource

Compassion ministry grows stronger when volunteers understand what they are being asked to do, who provides supervision, what boundaries they must honor, and how their service supports the larger mission. A clear role description protects volunteers, participants, ministry leaders, and the church or organization.

Use this template before recruiting volunteers, during orientation, when adding a new role, or when an existing role has become unclear. Complete one role description at a time and review it with the volunteer before service begins.

How to Use This Template

- ☐ Define the role before asking someone to fill it.
- ☐ List only the responsibilities that genuinely belong to this role.
- ☐ Clarify schedule, attendance, preparation, and length of commitment before the volunteer says yes.
- ☐ Include supervision, boundaries, confidentiality, safety, referral, and reporting expectations.
- ☐ Identify any screening, training, driving, technology, child-safety, or vulnerable-adult requirements that apply.
- ☐ Review the role after the first 30 days and again after 90 days when the role is new or developing.
- ☐ Update the role whenever responsibilities, schedule, supervision, policies, or safety needs change.

Why Role Clarity Matters

Many volunteer problems are not heart problems; they are clarity problems. People may overstep, under-serve, burn out, or become discouraged because expectations were never made clear. A role description is not meant to make ministry cold or corporate. It helps compassion remain wise, safe, consistent, and sustainable.

Before You Write the Role

Area	Clarifying Question	Notes
Purpose	Why does this role exist, and what ministry outcome does it support?	
People Served	Who will this volunteer serve or support?	

Area	Clarifying Question	Notes
Responsibilities	What should this volunteer do regularly?	
Limits	What is outside this volunteer's role?	
Training	What must the volunteer know before beginning?	
Supervision	Who gives direction, support, and correction?	
Safety	When must the volunteer stop, report, refer, or ask for help?	

Volunteer Role Description

Ministry name	
Volunteer role title	
Ministry area / program	
Supervisor / team leader	
Backup supervisor	
Date prepared / reviewed	

1. Purpose of the Role

In one or two sentences, explain why this role exists and the difference it is intended to make.

How this role supports the ministry's purpose:

2. People This Volunteer Will Serve or Support

Primary group served or supported:

Important access, communication, cultural, language, literacy, disability, age, or other considerations:

Desired Outcome

What should be stronger, clearer, safer, or more supportive because this volunteer serves well?

Responsibilities and Time Commitment

Keep the list focused. If a responsibility belongs to another role or requires professional credentials, do not place it here simply because a willing volunteer might be able to help.

3. Main Responsibilities

Responsibility	How Often	Notes

Responsibility	How Often	Notes

4. Time Commitment

Days / schedule	
Hours per week or month	
Length of commitment	
Preparation or follow-up time	
Attendance / substitute expectations	

5. Skills, Gifts, or Experience Helpful for This Role

Helpful qualities, gifts, or experience:

Required license, certification, driving status, professional credential, or other qualification (if any):

Training, Screening, and Supervision

Not every role requires the same preparation. Mark only what applies, but do not skip requirements simply because the ministry is small or volunteer-led.

6. Before the Volunteer Begins

☐ Ministry purpose and role description reviewed.

- ☐ Volunteer application or references completed when required.
- ☐ Background check completed when required.
- ☐ Child-safety or vulnerable-adult training completed when applicable.
- ☐ Driving / vehicle / insurance requirements verified when transportation is part of the role.
- ☐ Confidentiality and privacy expectations reviewed.
- ☐ Participant communication, texting, social media, and photography expectations reviewed.
- ☐ Emergency, incident-reporting, and referral procedures reviewed.
- ☐ Role-specific training or shadowing completed.
- ☐ Volunteer knows whom to contact when uncertain or when the situation exceeds the role.

Role-specific training still needed:

7. Supervision and Support

Primary supervisor	
Backup contact	
Regular check-in schedule	
Who approves changes to the role?	
Who receives concerns or complaints?	

Support Is Part of Supervision

Good supervision is not only correction. It includes prayer, encouragement, feedback, problem-solving, reasonable workload, and permission to ask for help. Volunteers should know that saying 'I need guidance' is a sign of responsibility, not failure.

Boundaries, Confidentiality, and Communication

Every compassion ministry should help volunteers understand what they can do, what they cannot do, and when they must ask for help. Boundaries protect both relationships and long-term ministry health.

8. Boundaries for This Role

This volunteer may:

This volunteer may not:

Discuss these areas when they apply:

- ☐ Personal money, gifts, loans, or financial assistance.
- ☐ Transportation or riding alone with participants.
- ☐ Home visits or meeting participants away from the ministry location.
- ☐ Sharing personal phone numbers, addresses, or social-media accounts.
- ☐ Texting, messaging, or contacting participants outside approved hours or systems.
- ☐ Photographs, stories, testimonials, prayer requests, or social-media posts.
- ☐ Professional counseling, medical advice, legal advice, case management, or other services outside the volunteer's qualifications.
- ☐ Prayer, Scripture, and spiritual conversations offered respectfully and in keeping with ministry policy.

9. Confidentiality and Privacy

Information this volunteer must protect:

Information that must be shared with the designated leader because of safety, policy, or legal requirements:

Privacy Reminder

Collect and share only information the ministry genuinely needs. Paper files, digital records, photos, participant stories, text messages, prayer requests, and attendance records should be handled according to ministry policy and limited to people who have a legitimate reason to access them.

Safety, Reporting, and Referrals

Volunteers should not be expected to investigate, diagnose, counsel beyond their training, or manage serious crises alone. Define the response before a difficult situation occurs.

10. When the Volunteer Must Stop and Ask for Help

Situation	Volunteer Response	Contact / Referral
Medical emergency or immediate danger		
Threatening, violent, or seriously disruptive behavior		
Concern about abuse, neglect, exploitation, or a vulnerable person		
Mental-health or substance-use crisis beyond the ministry role		
Domestic violence or serious safety concern		
Request for professional legal, medical, counseling, or financial advice		
Repeated request that exceeds the ministry's stated scope or boundaries		

11. Incident and Concern Reporting

Who should the volunteer contact first?

What situations require a written incident or concern report?

Where are emergency numbers, referral contacts, and ministry procedures kept?

Who communicates with church leadership, parents/guardians, partner agencies, emergency services, or others when needed?

Do Not Investigate

When a concern involves possible abuse, danger, criminal behavior, or another serious matter, the volunteer should follow the church or ministry's reporting procedure and applicable law. The volunteer should not conduct a personal investigation or promise secrecy that cannot be kept.

Volunteer Support, Review, and Agreement

A role description should be a living tool. Review it after the volunteer has real experience in the role, and adjust the role when the ministry changes.

12. Volunteer Support Plan

How will the volunteer receive encouragement and feedback?	
How can the volunteer request help or a break?	
Who covers the role when the volunteer is absent?	
What signs would tell us the workload is too heavy?	
What additional training or resources may be needed?	

13. Review Schedule

- ☐ Review after the first 30 days of service.
- ☐ Review again after 90 days when the role is new or developing.
- ☐ Review annually for ongoing roles.
- ☐ Review sooner if responsibilities, policies, supervision, participant needs, or safety requirements change.

Changes or support needed at the next review:

Volunteer Commitment and Ministry Acknowledgment

I understand the purpose, responsibilities, time expectations, boundaries, confidentiality expectations, safety procedures, and reporting structure for this volunteer role. I agree to serve with compassion, humility, consistency, and respect for the people being served. I understand that I should ask for guidance when I am uncertain and should not act outside the boundaries of this role.

Volunteer name	
Volunteer signature / date	
Ministry leader name	
Ministry leader signature / date	

Final Encouragement

Volunteers are often the hands and feet of compassion ministry. When they are cared for, trained, supported, and given clear expectations, they are better prepared to serve others with grace, wisdom, steadiness, and the love of Christ.