

MILL CITY GROWS - VOLUNTEER FAQ's

1) How do I sign up to volunteer as an individual?

- Navigate to the calendar on our volunteer page and click on an open volunteer event; once on a volunteer event, click on "register now" to fill out a signup form. Once the form is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email with a Personal Site through which you can sign up for more volunteer days
- Individual volunteers are welcome out on the farm May through October.

2) How do I register my group for a group volunteer day?

- Mill City Grows offers team-building volunteer sessions with organizations from school and church groups to local businesses and corporate groups. When you and your team volunteer with Mill City Grows, you'll have the chance to give back to the community first hand, while getting to know your team in an active and rejuvenating setting. Allow your group the opportunity to stretch their legs and connect over a cause!
- Please email volunteer@millcitygrows.org to register. Please include what dates you're interested in booking, as well as information on group size, age, ability, and any other relevant information.
- We welcome groups of 5-15 participants from 1-4pm every Friday June through October.
- Starting in 2019 we respectfully request that volunteer groups make a tax-deductible donation prior to volunteering with us. Your donation ensures our ability to provide the staff support needed to make your volunteering experience a success. We greatly appreciate the impact that volunteers have on our programs and community! To ensure we have safe, fun, and productive volunteer days we have to have staff members present at all group volunteer days. For groups of 5 people we ask for a donation of \$100, for 10 people we ask for a donation of \$200, and for groups of 15 we ask for a donation of \$300. Please be in touch if such a contribution is prohibitive for your group. Thank you so much for your support!

3) What should I expect to do as a volunteer?

- Expect to get dirty! You will most likely be seeding, transplanting, weeding, mulching, shoveling, cultivating soil, and harvesting at either one of our farm sites or one of our gardens.

4) How can I prepare for my volunteer day?

We work rain or shine, unless it is a torrential downpour or there is thunder/lightning. Wear clothing that is appropriate and comfortable for working outside, bending, lifting, and walking.

- **Shoes:** Wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes that you don't mind getting dirty. In the spring and fall when the fields are muddy, rubber boots work well. *No sandals!*
- **Clothing:** Long sleeves and long pants are highly recommended for protecting your skin from plant irritants, the sun, and ticks. Dress in layers, the mornings can be chilly but

once the sun comes out it can easily get hot. Clothing that breathes and wicks water is useful. In general, wear clothing you would for any outdoor activity and that you don't mind getting dirty.

- **Hats/Sunscreen:** Wear a hat to keep you warm and to protect you from the sun. Even on cloudy days it is important to have sun protection.
- **Water:** We will have cups and coolers of water, but volunteers are encouraged to bring water and to drink a lot of it (especially when it is hot out)!
- **Medications:** If you have allergies to any kind of plants or insect bites, please let us know in advance, and make sure to bring along any medication that you will need in case of an allergic reaction. If you have other potentially life-threatening health conditions, please inform Mill City Grows staff, rest when you need to, ask for help, etc. *Please note, there are honey bees and other bees present on the farm. If you have a serious allergy, please let us know and bring appropriate medication with you to the farm*
- **Bugs and Plant Irritants:** Please keep in mind that we will be out in nature! Mosquitoes, ticks, and poison ivy can all be present on the farm. We carry bug spray and poison ivy wash in our First Aid supplies, but preventing exposure with long pants and long sleeve shirts is the best line of defense.

5) Where do volunteer days take place?

- Most of our volunteer sessions are held at our Big Farm in Pawtucketville. When you sign up to volunteer, we will email you with details on how to find our farm location. In order to respect the privacy of our neighbors, we don't publicize the address on our website.
- We also have group volunteer days at some of our school and community gardens. If you register as a group, we will inform you of the location of your volunteer session, whether it be out on the farm or at one of our gardens.

6) If I am already registered to volunteer with Mill City Grows, how do I sign up for new volunteer days?

- When you first signed up to volunteer with us, you should have received an email with a link to your Personal Site. Please save this link, as you can register for more volunteer days in the future through the calendar on your site—find this through a Job Calendar tab in the upper-left corner.
- You can also navigate to your Personal Site through our volunteer page; look for the "Returning Volunteer?" field and login with your email. A link to your Personal Site will be emailed to you. In your email, click on that link and navigate to the Job Calendar tab in the upper-left corner of the site. You can sign up for more volunteer days by clicking on events in the calendar.

7) How old does one have to be to volunteer?

- All ages are welcome to volunteer, but ages 18 and under must first fill out a Mill City Grows waiver signed by a guardian. Youth ages 12 and under should be accompanied by an adult.

- If you are looking to register a youth group ages 13-18 to volunteer, please note that for every 5 youth, one adult must be present. If the group consists of children 12 and under, we may direct you to our Youth Food Justice Program—call (978) 455-2620 to find out more!

8) Can my volunteer hours contribute to a community service program?

- Yes! After you have volunteered with us, we will work with you to provide a letter acknowledging your volunteer hours.

9) How many others will be there if I volunteer as an individual?

- Typically there will be 4-10 volunteers present for individual volunteer days.

10) Can I bring a friend?

- Absolutely! They are encouraged to register through our website beforehand, but drop-ins are also welcome.

11) Can I volunteer over the winter?

- Our volunteer program is open from May through October. We don't currently have the capacity for winter office volunteers, but we welcome inquiries and suggestions: please email volunteer@millcitygrows.org.

12) Can I volunteer if I have a disability?

- Yes. We have had volunteers of all backgrounds, experience levels, and abilities, including those with disabilities. If you require specific accommodations or have concerns, please reach out to us by emailing volunteer@millcitygrows.org. We will work with you to figure out the best way you can support food access and urban farming in Lowell.

13) How can I become more involved with Mill City Grows?

- If you are interested in intern or job opportunities with Mill City Grows, please email hr@millcitygrows.org. If you have interest in volunteering in other capacities, email volunteer@millcitygrows.org.