



Barrier Free Living Volunteer Manual



Updated February 2026

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Welcome to Barrier Free Living



We are grateful for your interest in Barrier Free Living (BFL). We are celebrating our 45th year anniversary in 2026 and volunteers have always been a vital part of our mission. At BFL our volunteers really do [Make A Difference!](#)

From [corporate teams](#) to [high school donation drive clubs](#) or dedicated individuals like [Darlene](#) (above) who painted several murals for BFL and received the Mission Impact award at our 2024 gala. Volunteers are part of the fabric of what we do at our shelter and programs for survivors of domestic violence with disabilities.

BFL's Mission



Above, volunteer Anneli with CEO Cynthia Amodeo. Anneli organized a toy drive for BFL kids in December 2025.

Barrier Free Living supports individuals with disabilities to live dignified lives free of all forms of abuse and bias. ([View our Mission Film](#))

BFL began its ground-breaking work with people with disabilities in 1978 as a Federally-funded Research and Demonstration Project first known as "Project Outward Bound."

Since then, BFL has gone on to work with thousands of people with disabilities, has launched several award-winning programs, and has been recognized as a leader in working with survivors of domestic violence with disabilities. BFL was honored in 2022 with the United States Department of Justice's National Crime Victim Service Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services.

BFL's Programs



BFL has four programs: Freedom House, an emergency domestic violence shelter; Secret Garden, a community based domestic violence program; BFL Apartments, a supportive housing program in the Bronx; and our newest vision, Freedom Village supportive housing on the lower east side.

Each program offers unique, exciting volunteer opportunities to support our mission. View the [ABC News story](#) about Freedom Village. Above, acclaimed mural artist [Crash](#) paints a mural at BFL Apartments in the Bronx. [Learn more about our programs.](#)

¹ Freedom House and Secret Garden are confidential locations working with survivors of domestic violence (see Volunteer Policies)

Volunteer Policies & Requirements



Above, volunteers organize the clothing pantry at Freedom House in 2026

Dress Code:

As part of our team and representing our commitment to our mission, we ask that volunteers dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties (which can range from gardening to clerical work). Volunteers reporting to an office setting are asked to use business casual as a guide.

Age Requirements

Barrier Free Living volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. In cases where a volunteer individual or group is under the age of 18, the agency works on a case-by-case basis to determine if the individual can work under the guidance of an adult or BFL team member.

Confidentiality

BFL volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of domestic violence survivors' personal identities and the location of our programs. All volunteers must sign an agency confidentiality agreement and meet with a team member to be fully oriented on confidentiality requirements.

BFL Codes of Conduct

Excerpted from the BFL Staff Handbook 2025. A complete copy is available.

Speak with a BFL Team member/supervisor regarding any questions.

Barrier Free Living, Inc. endeavors to maintain a positive work environment. Each employee plays a role in fostering this environment. Accordingly, we all must abide by certain rules of conduct, based on honesty, common sense, and fair play. Because everyone may not have the same idea about proper workplace conduct, it is helpful to adopt and enforce rules all can follow.

Unacceptable conduct may subject the offender to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, in the Agency's sole discretion. The following are examples of some, but not all, conduct which can be considered unacceptable:

- Obtaining employment on the basis of false or misleading information.
- Stealing, removing, or defacing Barrier Free Living, Inc. property or a co-worker's property, and/or disclosure of confidential information.

- Completing another employee's time records. Violation of safety rules and policies. Violation of Barrier Free Living, Inc.'s Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.
- Fighting, threatening, or disrupting the work of others or other violations of Barrier Free Living, Inc.'s Workplace Violence Policy.
- Failure to follow lawful instructions of a supervisor.
- Failure to perform assigned job duties.
- Violation of the Punctuality and Attendance Policy, including but not limited to irregular attendance, habitual lateness, or unexcused absences.
- Gambling on Agency property.
- Willful or careless destruction or damage to Agency assets or to the equipment or possessions of another employee.
- Wasting work materials.
- Performing work of a personal nature during working time.
- Violation of the Solicitation and Distribution Policy.
- Violation of Barrier Free Living, Inc.'s Harassment or Equal Employment Opportunity Policies.
- Violation of the Communication and Computer Systems Policy.
- Unsatisfactory job performance.