WorkForce HANDBOOK

# About us

Almost Home, Inc. of S. Weld and Adams Counties welcomes you to our WorkForce Program. Our tried and true program was built based on almost 30 years of experience helping get our community members housed. Our goal for our WorkForce is that they leave a shift having learned valuable skills that will allow them to succeed in their future careers. Most importantly, they leave with a sense of pride in their work, knowing that the time that they have donated to our organization has allowed our Staff to increase our capacity to prevent individuals from experiencing homelessness.

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# What WorkForce Means

Becoming a part of Almost Home WorkForce is the best way to build your resume while supporting those experiencing homelessness. Our intern and workforce programs are meticulously planned by our team, and designed in a manner geared toward the maximization of efficiency and personal development. Your time is valuable, so our goal is to make your work experience here the best it can be in order to prepare you to be the best employee you can be. By investing in each other, we invest in the future of our communities.

Our Mission:

We promote self-sufficiency and provide assistance to those individuals and families experiencing housing instability. At Almost Home, we prevent and confront homelessness in Adams and S. Weld County through our emergency assistance programs. Each of our programs are designed to make homelessness rare, brief or one time. Our targeted services help members of our community develop the skills and obtain the resources to reach long-term self-sufficiency.

Work Experience and Internship Guidelines:

Internships:

US Federal Courts have identified the following seven factors as requirements of an intern-employer relationship:

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, expressed or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee—and vice versa.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern’s academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
5. The extent to which the internship’s duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
6. The extent to which the intern’s work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
7. The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

These factors are in accordance to the US Fair Labor Standards Act: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/whdfs71.pdf>

Community Service Completion:

You must complete \_\_\_ hours of community service within \_\_\_ months. The probation officer will supervise the participation in the program by approving the program (agency, location, frequency of participation, etc.). You must provide written verification of completed hours to the probation officer.

1. Community service placements are to be purposeful, realistic, appropriate, reliable, and designed to benefit the community. Defendants are not compensated for their community service. Probation officers are always to disclose the defendant’s criminal history so that the potential placement agency may make an informed decision to accept a placement.
2. Defendants should be required to complete their community service obligation promptly unless there is a reasonable basis to delay the placement. For example, initiation of community service may be delayed to allow employed defendants to complete an imposed term of home confinement, to allow for intensive corrective treatment, to stabilize a drug-abusing defendant, or to allow the defendant to meet short-term extraordinary personal or family responsibilities. If an extensive delay is contemplated, the probation officer should either request that the special condition be removed or notify the court of the anticipated delay in implementation.
3. Factors to be considered in making placements include the sentencing objective(s) of the court; the characteristics, skills, and abilities of the defendant; the needs of the community; third-party risk (see: Chapter 2, Section XII); and logistical considerations, such as the availability of transportation and the time necessary to complete the required hours vis-à-vis the defendant’s other employment, family, and financial responsibilities.
4. The community service site selected should provide non-denominational services to the community. For example, a defendant should not receive community service credit for serving as a deacon in his or her church; however, the defendant may perform community service at a church soup kitchen open to all members of the community.
5. The site selected should also have a reliable manager who is willing to work with the probation officer to provide accurate information regarding the defendant’s attendance and participation.
6. Compliance with community service hours may be verified by on-site monitoring, contacting the service agency, and/or reviewing documentation provided by the service agency. The degree of personal or on-site contact with the service agency will depend on the degree and nature of the risk presented by the defendant and the extent to which the probation office has developed an ongoing relationship with the service agency.
7. For defendants who qualify for low-risk supervision standards under Judicial Conference policy (see: Chapter 1, Section II(C)(1)), probation officers may rely exclusively on documentation review for monitoring the community service, though increased verification (written, telephonic, or personal) may be required in appropriate cases (e.g., insufficient documentation). Probation officers should direct these defendants (who otherwise have no supervision issues) to complete their community service as quickly as possible without compromising other prosocial activities (e.g., employment).

For more information, please visit: <https://www.uscourts.gov/services-forms/community-service-probation-supervised-release-conditions>

# Onboarding

# Below are our organization-wide policies that require every WorkForce Participant to agree to adhering to the “WorkForce General Agreement” and “Release of Liability” forms. Your site supervisor or Staff will notify you if a training is necessary prior to service, if it is not already a part of the shift description in the section “Our Shifts”. If you have questions about our policies, please email Almost Home, Inc. at [volunteers@almosthomeonline.org](mailto:volunteers@almosthomeonline.org) or call (303) 659-6199 ext. 117 and we will respond within 24 hours or we will respond on the next business day.

Please review our policies and applicable trainings:

# **COVID-19 Policy**

The CDC and Colorado’s Public Health Department recommends weekly testing for all individuals working and living in homeless shelters, or working with literal homeless households. People experiencing homelessness are at greater risk for infection and it is recommended that the individuals described above get tested weekly to reduce the risk of transmission. Almost Home, Inc. wants our workforce to be aware that working with homeless households or those experiencing homelessness *does* increase your risk of contracting COVID-19 and other bacterial and viral infections. **We will enforce wearing a face covering when directly interacting with our clients and during indoor shifts.** Examples include, but are not limited to: SWAP onboarding events, inside shelter maintenance, etc. If you do not comply with our COVID-19 Policy at any point during your service, you will be asked to leave and your hours for the day will be forfeited. Please keep yourself and our staff safe by testing regularly, getting vaccinated, and staying informed.

**Dress Code**

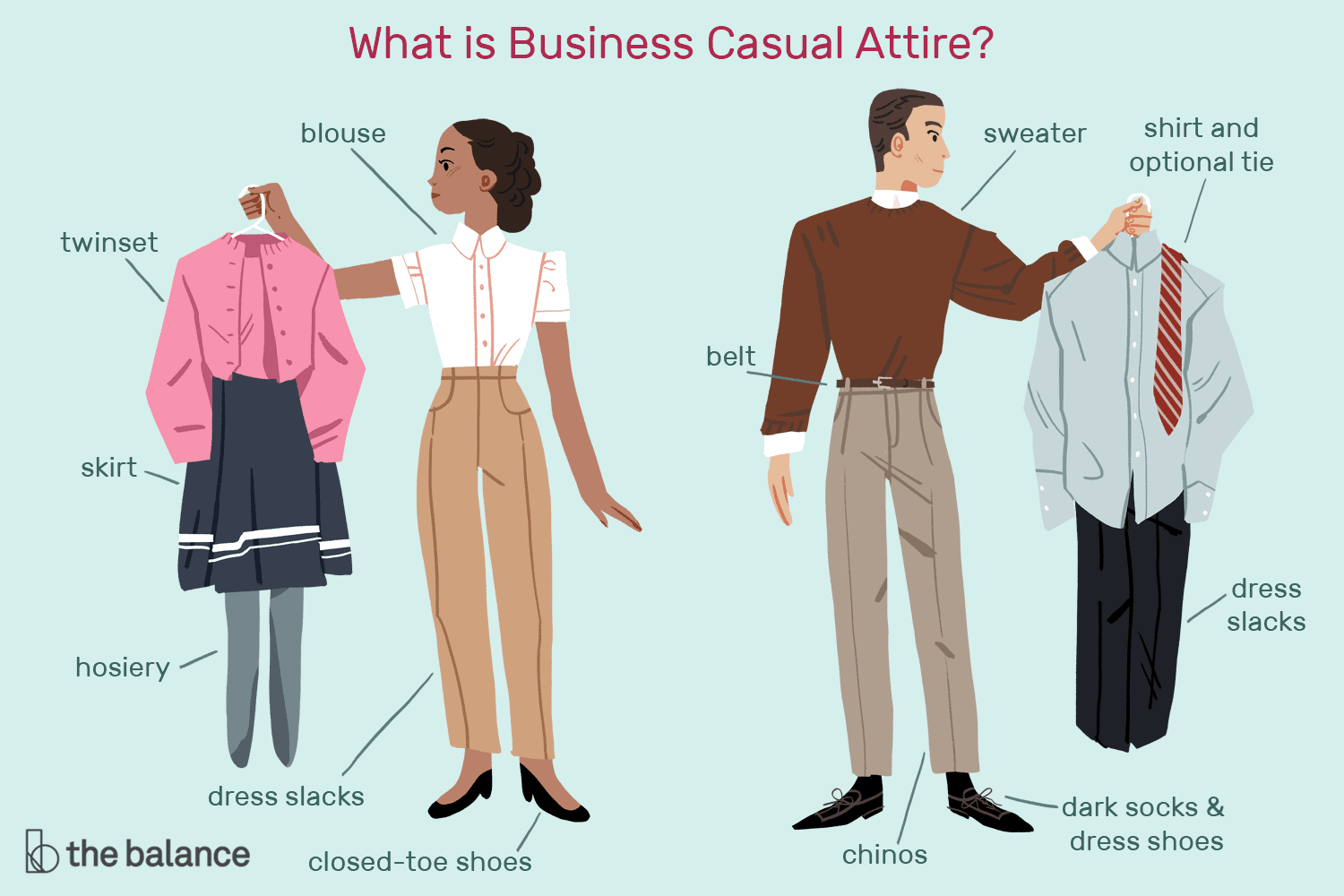
Always check the forecast in preparation for extreme heat and cold weather, especially for Outreach and Shelter shifts. Here are some of our recommendations and requirements:

Required:

* **Must wear shoes, shirts, and bottoms at all times at all sites.**
* No gang-related paraphernalia, logos, flags or colors.
* No revealing shirts or bottoms (ie belly-buttons, see-through).
* A layer of clothing material must be between your skin and your seat at all times in order to maintain cleanliness at our sites and in our vehicles.

Recommendations:

* Business casual when in our offices, but **we allow jeans!**
  + See below for business casual guidance
* Be cautious with long jewelry and rings if working outside, it may be lost, and we are not to be held responsible.
* Be weary of low-cut tops or short bottoms as your shift may require lots of movement, which is always dependent on the business of the day.



**Trainings**

Certain shifts require special training depending on who, how, or where our workforce will be serving. The requirements of each shift will be specified in their descriptions under the “Our Shifts” section. In the “WorkForce Agreement” or through your internship onboarding, you agree to complete and adhere to the trainings required of the shift. These trainings/handouts are important for providing efficient and ethical services to our clients in order to best serve them, as well as keep our workforce safe.

General and Safety:

***All Shifts require general and safety training.***

* “HANK” Handout
* Incident Reporting Sheet
* WorkForce Agreement

Ethics Training:

Our mission is to promote self-sufficiency and provide assistance to those experiencing housing instability. It is important for our workforce that work directly with our clients understand that **not every client wants to be housed**. This does not mean, however, that they are undeserving or do not require the resources we can provide them. It is also important that you are familiar with two of our most important housing philosophies: **housing first and trauma informed care.** Watch these 3 videos to prevent potentially traumatic or harmful interactions between yourself and our clients:

Housing First (4 minute overview):<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwdq2VWavtc>

What is Trauma Informed Care? (4 minute overview):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wxnzVib2p4

Trauma and the Brain (6 minutes overview):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLF_SEy6sdc>

Digital:

If your shift requires a digital training, this means you will be using, or potentially using, one of our computers with access too:

* Teams
  + Communication with Staff members
  + Voicemail Log
* H:Drive Resources
  + Digital copies of General & Safety Training forms
  + Social media cheat sheet
  + Social media/Canva login information
* Donor Information
  + Email, phone number and address
  + Donor Stewardship Program
* Printer
  + To copy, scan, and complete other office organization tasks

*If you have a knack for design and want to express your creativity, we may ask you to work on our Canva templates, social media marketing, and other advertisements to assist our Deputy Director and Development Coordinator.*

Our Roles

Our WorkForce Program differs from our Volunteer Program to include our internship positions, consistent volunteers, and those serving in order to complete court or school mandated community service hours. Below are descriptions of those types of workforce participants and the shifts they can participate in. Descriptions of those shifts can be found under the section “Our Shifts”. Please read about the options below to know which describes you best! Email [volunteers@almosthomeonlin.org](mailto:volunteers@almosthomeonlin.org) or call (303) 659-6199 ext. 117 for any additional information or questions.

**Mandated Community Service WorkForce**

We are more than happy to help you complete your mandated community service hours! However, certain restrictions do apply: under no circumstances may workforce participants interact directly with clients during their shift. The only exception is returning voicemails over the phone when completing an Administrative Assistance shift. Shifts available to you include: Administrative Assistance→ **Office Work**, Outreach→ **SWAP Support** and **Hospitality,** and in our Emergency Family Shelter→ **Shelter Clean-Up**

**Consistent Volunteers**

Anyone who dedicates their time on a consistent basis is considered a part of our workforce in respect to their dedication to the organization. **All shifts** listed in this program are open to those simply interested in donating their time. Dates and times of service can be coordinated with one of our staff at any time.

**Prairie View High School: PVHS Internship**

This is a program partnership between Almost Home, Inc. and Prairie View High School. The role of each intern is subject to change each semester to best meet the needs of the Executive and Administrative Teams of our Staff. As well as to best match the goals and abilities of the intern.

**University of Colorado-Denver: GSSW Internship**

Our newest internship program partners with the University of Colorado-Denver’s Graduate School of Social Work to immerse and mold graduate students into the best social service providers they can be. The role of each intern is subject to change to not only meet the needs of our Staff, but also meet the goals and interests of each student. This program has its own specific onboarding, so please contact [volunteers@almosthomeonline.org](mailto:volunteers@almosthomeonline.org), your school’s Internship Coordinator, or other academic counselor for more information about the special work experiences we offer.

**Don’t See Your School or Position Listed?**

If your school has an internship program and you would like to serve your hours with Almost Home, Inc., please contact your academic counselor and our staff at [volunteers@almosthomeonline.org](mailto:volunteers@almosthomeonline.org) or call us at (303) 659-6199 ext. 117. We would love to work with you and your school to give you valuable practice in your desired field.

# Our Shifts

All workforce participants will receive a mandatory onboarding on their first day of service depending on the type of WorkForce Participant they become, or the shift they serve. As a reminder, you may not serve or will be asked to leave if you do not sign the applicable waivers or complete the onboarding subject to each “role”. Any additional forms will be available upon request if not already included in your Orientation Packet. Further details about documenting your hours can be discussed with the site supervisor if not outlined below. Please contact [volunteers@almosthomeonline.org](mailto:volunteers@almosthomeonline.org) or call (303) 659-6199 ext. 117 for any additional information or questions.

1. **Administrative Assistance**

**Office Work**

Show employers that you are competent working in an office! This shift includes all duties that do not fall under any of our other categories, but that support our staff. Duties may include, but are not limited too: Potential duties may include, but are not limited to: hand-writing thank you notes, assisting with event preparation, mailings, filing, clean-up, answering emails, donor thank you calls, and more.  *If you have a knack for design and want to express your creativity, we may ask you to work on our Canva templates, facebook marketing, and other advertisements to assist our Deputy Director*.

Location: **22 S. 4th St. Ste. 106, Brighton, CO 80601**

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety
* Digital

Hours: Subjective; schedule shifts with your Almost Home, Inc. supervisor.

**Housing Navigation Center:**

About the Center: The Housing Navigation Center is the newest addition to the services Almost Home provides, and is the face of our organization. This is where clients check-in for their appointments, ask us questions, apply for benefits, learn about other resources, and have their mailed delivered here. It’s also where children play while their guardian meets with their Case Manager, so we ask those serving at the center to be comfortable around children.

Location: **22 S. 4th Ave, Ste. 106, Brighton, CO 80601**

Hours of Operation:

* Monday: 8:30am-4:30pm
* Tuesday 8:30am-4:30pm
* Wednesday: 8:30am-6:30pm
* Thursday: 8:30am-4:30pm
* Friday: 8:30am-12:30pm

Description:

Serving at the Housing Navigation Center is a great way to fill your resume with customer service and crisis support experience! Similar to a receptionist position, you will act as the face of Almost Home, Inc. This shows potential employers that you are confident and capable of representing a brand well. You will be responsible for greeting a client as they enter the center, check-in, check-out, notifying their Case Managers or other staff of their arrival, and other general front office duties. Including answering any questions to the best of your ability and distributing our snack and hygiene kits.

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety
* Ethics Training
* Digital Training

Hours: Normal hours of operation, shifts typically rotate every 2hrs.

1. **Emergency Family Shelter**

About the Shelter & Disclaimer: The Almost Home, Inc. Emergency Family Shelter is offered to families experiencing literal homelessness. In the shelter, clients have 60 days to work towards self-sufficiency and secure permanent housing until they move on to the next phase in their housing journey. We are the only family shelter in Adams County and have provided shelter for almost 30 years. It is important to understand that our shelter is, for many residents, the first permanent shelter they have had in months. Our shelter families have worked hard to apply and accept a room in our shelter, so we take pride in our shelter’s ability to act as a safe haven while families find financial stability. Therefore, we have high expectations for our workforce when they are representing Almost Home, Inc. to bediscrete, courteous, and respectfulon the shelter premises.  **All workforce that do not meet our expectations will be asked to leave and not be welcomed back**. Any incidents reported to Almost Home, Inc. staff and extended agents involving a workforce participant and a resident will be investigated.

**Family Shelter Clean Up:**

From repainting the walls of rooms, to pulling weeds outside, this is one way to ensure that our facilities are in pristine condition as new families move in and out. It is a wonderful way to prove to future employers your integrity and organizational skills. We ask that those working on site be comfortable around children, as this is a family shelter.

Location: **568 E. Bridge St. Brighton, CO 80601**

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety

Hours: Subjective; schedule shifts with your Almost Home, Inc. supervisor.

**Shelter Driver:**

Including transporting donations from Almost Home, Inc. headquarters or home pickups, we need capable and responsible drivers to transport the shelter residents to and from their appointments. Some of our residents do not have their own vehicle or access to public transportation, but have urgent appointments that impact their ability to find housing. A consistent shelter driver would be a huge asset to the progression plan of each resident.

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety
* Ethics
* Driver Application and Liability Release Form

Hours: Subjective; schedule shifts with your Almost Home, Inc. supervisor.

1. **Outreach**

**SWAP (Severe Weather Action Plan) Support:**

Directly serve the Housing Services Director and Outreach Team to assist them during Activation Days. A mix between office work and client interaction, this is a wonderful way to gain first hand social work experience and learn how nonprofits operate. *Not eligible for any WorkForce Participants completing court mandated community service.*

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety
* Ethics

Hours: Subjective; schedule shifts with your Almost Home, Inc. supervisor.

**Overnight Stay:**

One of SWAP’s biggest priorities is maintaining a positive relationship with the owners and managers of the hotels and motels that partner with us. One way to ensure we can continue to save lives during severe weather is by monitoring the guests overnight. Your responsibilities include addressing any questions or concerns of the guests, resolving minor complaints, and acting as a general support system for patrons between the facility and Almost Home, Inc. You will have your own private room/office for the night, along with other accommodations to ensure your safety and the success of the activation. *Not eligible for any WorkForce Participants completing court mandated community service.*

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety
* Ethics

Hours: Subjective; schedule shifts with your Almost Home, Inc. supervisor.

**Hospitality:**

One of SWAP’s biggest priorities is maintaining a positive relationship with the owners and managers of the hotels and motels that partner with us. One way to ensure we can continue to save lives during severe weather is by assisting the hotel/motel staff with their clean-up. Some patrons leave behind shopping carts, belongings, etc. when they check out. Removing those items helps the hotel/motel staff from working overtime, increased nightly rates, and any additional charges Almost Home, Inc. may incur.

Mandatory Trainings:

* General and Safety

Hours: Dependent on checkout time and date of each hotel/mote. Schedule shifts with your Almost Home, Inc. supervisor.

Restrictions

## WorkForce <18

## “Per USDOL, individuals under 18 cannot volunteer without the consent of their parent or legal guardian.” -Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

## Almost Home requires that all underage workforce participants, in addition to the “WorkForce Agreement”, submit a “Parental Agreement” form signed by a parent/legal guardian before starting their service OR upon arrival.

## WorkForce with Disabilities

## “An individual with a disability must be legally competent to freely [donate] his or her services.” -Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

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## At Almost Home, we want to work with our workforce like we do with our clients to “meet them where they are at”. If you experience certain physical or mental disabilities, you may not be eligible to serve at specific sites or perform specific duties. However, we are always willing to find or create new opportunities to accommodate your needs in order to provide you with a valuable service experience.