Volunteer Hour Logging Troubleshooting & FAQ

Troubleshooting

Problem: I do not know how to log my volunteer hours!

Solution: Watch this video explanation! If you are already a Tucson Audubon volunteer, simply start the video at minute 1:11 as there is no need to re-apply.

Problem: I am unable to access the specific date I volunteered in my timesheet OR I am locked out of my timesheet.

Reason: The likely reason for this issue is that you previously logged hours for a date in the same week as the date you are trying to access and clicked "save and submit for approval." By pressing this, you are closing out the timesheet for the entire week and submitting it to the Volunteer Coordinator to "approve" hours, allowing them into our system. This safeguard is mostly in place to prevent accidental typos. However, technically, the Volunteer & Education Manager is approving the *whole* timesheet for the week, meaning the system will not allow you to enter your hours for anything else in that calendar week.

Solution: "Save" hours is the other option you can choose as opposed to "save and submit." By choosing this option, the system will save what you have inputted, but will not yet submit them to the Volunteer Coordinator to be approved.

All you need to remember is this:
- **If you don't think you will volunteer again for the rest of the week, hit "save and submit for approval."**
- **If you are planning to volunteer later in the week, hit "save"**

Do not worry about making a mistake here; it's extremely easy to fix! If you save but accidentally forget to submit hours, the Volunteer Coordinator will see them and go ahead and approve them for you after a few weeks. If you submit your hours and then need to go back and add hours, just email the Volunteer Coordinator and they will re-open your timesheet.

Problem: When I attempt to log in, the system says my email address is not valid.

Reason: Most often, this error occurs when the email address you entered into our system when you first became a member or a volunteer is different than the email address you are using to try and log in, even if you've never set up a volunteer portal before. This can also happen when couples who share an email address both attempt to create separate volunteer accounts.

Solution: Email the Volunteer Coordinator with a) the email address with which you attempted to log in and b) your preferred email address. If you are part of a couple that shares an email address, at least one of you will need to use a different email address. The Volunteer & Education Manager will then ensure your profile is up to date, allowing you to create a volunteer portal.

Problem: I do not see the project for which I volunteered as an option.

Reason: All volunteer hours are logged as part of specific projects, allowing Tucson Audubon to monitor what volunteer work is happening and to allow us to use certain volunteer hours for grant applications. The system requires that a volunteer be added to a project before that volunteer is permitted to log hours for that project. If the project you worked on does not appear in your volunteer portal, it means that the Volunteer Coordinator has not added you to that project yet.

Solution: Email the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Project Leader and ask to be added to the project.

Problem: I do not know which project to log my hours under.

Reason: All volunteer hours are logged as part of specific projects, allowing Tucson Audubon to monitor what volunteer work is happening and to allow us to use certain volunteer hours for grant applications. Some volunteers work on multiple projects and therefore have a choice about which project to select when entering hours.

Solution: Email the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Project Leader and ask which project is most appropriate.

Problem: My problem is not listed here!

Solution: Email the Volunteer & Engagement Coordinator (astark@tucsonaudubon.org) and she will work with you to find a solution!

FAQ

Question: Why do I need to log my volunteer hours?

Answer: Tracking your volunteer hours is important for a number of reasons, both for you and for Tucson Audubon. Recorded hours:

- Measure the impact Tucson Audubon volunteers have on the organization, birds, and nature.
- Secure the grants that are essential for Tucson Audubon Society to function. These grants are awarded based in part on volunteer hours. Volunteer hours can also be used as "match" funding for grants we are awarded.
- Help to assess program effectiveness and efficiency so we can plan for the future.
- Give you access to certain volunteer benefits such as Nature Shop discounts and appreciation events.

Question: Do I need to account for travel time, mileage, and/or expenses?

Answer: Travel time to and from a volunteer project should be included in your volunteer time. It does not need to be recorded separately; it can be combined with the hours you spend working on a project. Mileage and expenses can be recorded as a means of record-keeping for you, but we usually do not use either of those metrics for our purposes (although certain Project Leaders may request that you include them). See [Question: Can I use my volunteer time in order to get a tax break?](#) for an explanation about why you might want that information for yourself.

Question: Why are some project hours, like IBA, tracked differently than others?

Answer: Because some projects are run in collaboration with other organizations (for example, IBA areas are managed in collaboration with Audubon Southwest), it's important that we are able to determine for whom someone is volunteering to avoid double counting volunteer hours. Furthermore, sometimes it's useful to have a greater level of detail than is possible to capture using our regular volunteer hour tracking system. We will enter these hours for you under the appropriate project so you will still get credit for volunteering.

Question: Can I use my volunteer time in order to get a tax break?

Answer: Yes and no. Tucson Audubon is a registered 510(c)3, so some of your contributions are deductible, but not all of them. Although you **cannot** use the time you spent volunteering for itemized tax deductions, you **can** use any expenses or mileage accrued. The Volunteer & Education Manager can verify any mileage that is officially in our hour tracking system, as well as any expenses. They will not, however, keep any receipts or other documentation you might need. See the following resources for more information:

- https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-utl/charities_and_their_volunteers_working_together_to_help_the_public.pdf

- https://www.hrblock.com/tax-center/filing/adjustments-and-deductions/volunteer-work-tax-deductions/

Question: My question is not listed here!

Answer: Email the Volunteer & Engagement Coordinator (astark@tucsonaudubon.org) and she will work with you to find the answer!