

Chicago Debates Volunteer Code of Conduct

Updated: July 2022

Mission and Values

We are on a mission to advance educational achievement, community contributions, and life's success through the transformative power of academic debate. To execute this goal we rely on our values of balance, community, excellence, justice, leadership, and solution oriented. We expect anyone representing Chicago Debates to understand and uphold these values in their work.

As an urban debate league, Chicago Debates strives to provide equitable programming that best meets the needs of our students and their schools. As a volunteer with our organization you understand the unique perspectives and goals that accompany working with our league, specifically how it differs from leagues on the National Circuit. One main difference is in how we fund our organization. As a 501c3 nonprofit, Chicago Debates provides free programming for all its participants and does not profit from any of its subsequent tournaments. As a participant with our tournament staff you are committing to the spirit of volunteerism, recognizing our inability to employ volunteers at the same rate many National Circuit leagues can. You are also committing to uphold the following standards:

Volunteer Standards

To volunteer with Chicago Debates you agree to uphold our mission and values while working in any capacity with the organization. This includes but is not limited to participation at Chicago Debates tournaments, practices, and/or special events. By completing this form you agree to do the following:

1. Speak to students with respect at all times.
2. Remain undistracted and attentive during rounds.
3. Be mindful of the tournament schedule by diligently showing up to rounds on time, or communicating promptly if you cannot do so (see the attendance section for further details).
4. Complete ballots and feedback in a timely manner so as to not delay the tournament.
5. Dress appropriately. Do not wear anything the students themselves would not be allowed to wear to school. A volunteer's dress may not be so unusual, inappropriate or lacking in cleanliness that it disrupts a participant's debate experience. This includes articles of clothing with offensive language, images, and/or adult content. Business casual attire is strongly suggested.
6. Respond in a timely manner to Chicago Debate staff if there are any tournament-related issues including but not limited to: argument violation, ballot concerns, tournament policy execution, etc.
7. Treat all members of the Chicago Debates community, including its staff, coaches, students, and fellow volunteers, with respect and integrity.

Behavior that is considered unacceptable and may result in immediate dismissal includes but is not limited to:

1. Consumption of or under the influence of illegal substances or impairment due to consumption of legal substances, including marijuana and alcohol, during a volunteer shift.
2. Harassment or discrimination of any kind to any person (see non-harassment policy section for greater detail).
3. Verbally abusing or attacking any tournament attendee including students, staff, coaches, and/or volunteers.
4. Destruction or theft of public property while attending a Chicago Debates tournament.
5. Disparaging Chicago Debates or its employees on social media or other platforms.
6. Soliciting or promoting personal business, political agendas, etc. to members of the Chicago Debates community without proper approval from Chicago Debates.

Chicago Debates volunteers who conduct themselves in a manner inconsistent with Chicago Debate's Mission and Values or the Volunteer Standards may be removed from participation in Chicago Debates activities. Such removal may be limited to removal from one round of debate up to permanent removal from participation, depending on the severity of the situation. The decision regarding removal and the severity of the revocation of participation is entirely at the sole discretion of Chicago Debates.

Attendance Policy

Tournaments are a delicate balance. Punctual and reliable volunteers are integral in ensuring we can execute a tournament and provide debate to as many students as possible. We understand that things come up, but last minute cancellations or no shows can significantly impact our tournament execution and the student experience. If you need to cancel your volunteer shift you will need to remove yourself from the tournament in the VolunteerLocal sign-up platform. An absence will be considered unexcused if one or more of the following are met:

- A volunteer cancels a shift less than 24-hours prior to the start of the tournament
- A volunteer does not check in for their scheduled shift and does not provide notice
- A volunteer leaves early from their scheduled shift without prior approval

Two or more unexcused absences per month will require a check-in with the Volunteer Manager to discuss future scheduling and will result in being removed from the schedule until such a meeting can take place. Exceptions for unexcused absences can be made for extenuating circumstances including illness, inclement weather, or family emergencies. Notify the Volunteer Manager if one of these instances occurs. This exception should not be abused.

Non-Harassment Policy

Chicago Debates does not tolerate any form of workplace harassment, including but not limited to, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and stalking. Harassment is defined as conduct relating to an individual's protected characteristics (e.g., sex, race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship,

pregnancy, veteran status, marital status or any other protected characteristics), which is severe or pervasive enough to make a reasonable person possessing the characteristic believe that the conditions of volunteering or participating in Chicago Debates's activities are altered and the environment is hostile or abusive, or unreasonably interferes with the individual's performance. Any volunteer or participant who believes that they have been harassed by anyone associated with Chicago Debates or its vendors, or who believes that another volunteer or participant is being subjected to such harassment, should report the situation immediately to the Volunteer and Outreach Manager. They may also submit a written report via the Notice of Judge Concern form.

Background Checks

To volunteer with Chicago Debates you agree to a monthly background check executed by Sterling Volunteers. You will not be allowed to participate or interact with students until the background check is complete. Chicago Debates reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer whose background check flags the following: recent or ongoing criminal charges, sex offender list, and/or government watchlist. If you are found ineligible to volunteer based on your background check you have the right to dispute any inaccurate or incomplete information gathered by our report. In the event of this, Chicago Debates will provide details of your report and contact information for repeal.

Notice of Judge Concern

The Notice of Judge Concern is a form coaches or volunteers can submit if they believe a judge is not following the standards and practices outlined in the code of conduct. This form should be used to report at risk behavior ranging from competitive questions to behavioral issues. If Chicago Debates receives a complaint on this form that warrants a need for further investigation, that volunteer may be put on a temporary hold until claims are investigated. If the complaint or behavior jeopardizes the comfort, safety, or confidence for a member(s) of the Chicago Debates community, and/or harms the reputation of the organization, Chicago Debates reserves the right to dismiss said volunteer indefinitely. Chicago Debates promises to conduct an investigation as a result of complaints in good faith.

For further questions or concerns regarding the Volunteer Code of Conduct please contact the Volunteer and Outreach Manager, Lauren Hince: lhince@chicagodebates.org