

Volunteer Welcome Guide





Every cancer. Every life.

The mission of the American Cancer Society is to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

Our vision is to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.



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Welcome to the American Cancer Society.

In this guide, you will find a high-level overview of the American Cancer Society and its mission, including links to additional information about our organization.

The American Cancer Society exists because the burden of cancer is unacceptably high. We are the only organization that integrates advocacy, discovery, and direct patient support to measurably improve the lives of cancer patients and their families.

With the help of millions of supporters, we launch breakthrough research, create empowering resources for people to understand cancer, enable local communities to support those affected, and convene powerful activists to create awareness and impact.

We believe that multicultural engagement and the diversity of our volunteers and staff are essential to the American Cancer Society's work to ensure that we make a difference in every community touched by cancer.

Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who performs a service willingly and without pay, either for or on behalf of the **American Cancer Society**.



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The American Cancer Society is able to make the cancer journey easier for patients and their caregivers because of YOU, along with more than one million other volunteers across the country. Your willingness to selflessly invest your time as a volunteer with the American Cancer Society is so impactful and so valued. Thank you for joining our family and our mission. Your compassion is easing the cancer burden and inspiring hope, and we couldn't do what we do without you.”

Dr. Karen Knudsen
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you for helping us save lives by agreeing to serve as an American Cancer Society volunteer.



Our history

The early years

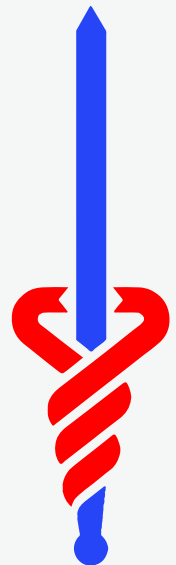
The American Cancer Society was founded in 1913 by 10 doctors and five laypeople in New York City. It was originally called the American Society for the Control of Cancer (ASCC). At that time, a cancer diagnosis meant near certain death. The disease was rarely mentioned in public, as it only triggered fear, anxiety, and denial. Doctors sometimes did not tell their patients they had cancer, and patients often did not tell their friends and families that they had been diagnosed with it.

The ASCC's founders knew they had to raise public awareness about cancer if progress was to be made against this disease. Despite the enormity of their task, our founders and their colleagues began writing articles for popular magazines and professional journals; publishing Campaign Notes, a monthly bulletin of cancer information; and recruiting doctors throughout the country to help educate the public.

It was in these early years that the organization first used its now-iconic

Sword of Hope

The twin-serpent caduceus, which forms the handle of the sword, emphasizes the medical and scientific nature of our work. Historically, twined serpents represent healing of the sick and creativity of the healthy.



Sword of Hope symbol, which today is part of our logo. The sword came from a 1928 nationwide poster contest sponsored by the ASCC and the New York City Cancer Committee. George E. Durant of Brooklyn won the contest, receiving a first prize of \$500. He selected the sword to express the crusading spirit of the cancer control movement.

The American Cancer Society logo



Our Sword of Hope symbol, first adopted in 1928, has since become an iconic and meaningful symbol in the history of the American Cancer Society. Our evolution of the sword is drawn with a blue sword, a symbol of courage in the pursuit of protecting life. The red twin-serpents around the base of the sword symbolize the balance between partnership in advocacy and medicine/science in health and healing.

The Women's Field Army

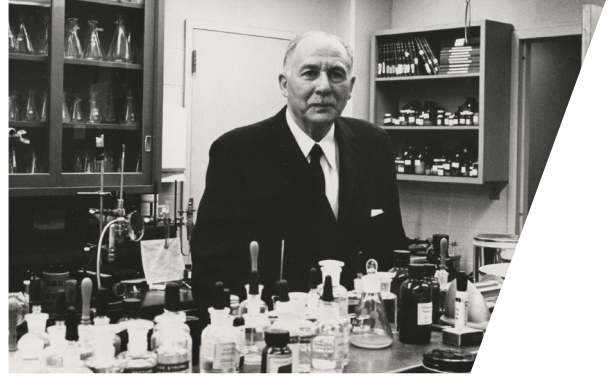
In 1936, Marjorie G. Illig, an ASCC field representative and chair of the General Federation of Women's Clubs Committee on Public Health, made an extraordinary suggestion. She proposed creating a legion of volunteers whose sole purpose was to wage war on cancer. The Women's Field Army, as this organization came to be called, was an enormous success. Its recruits donned khaki uniforms, complete with insignia of rank and achievement, and went out into the streets to raise money and educate the public.



In 1935, there were 15,000 people active in cancer control throughout the United States. At the close of 1938, there were about 10 times that number. More than anything else, it was the Women's Field Army that moved the ASCC to the forefront of voluntary health organizations.

New directions

In 1945, the ASCC was reorganized as the American Cancer Society. It was the beginning of a new era for the organization. World War II was over – the single greatest threat to modern democracy had been defeated – and the nation could at last focus its attention on the public health enemy at home. Many believed it was time for another bold move.



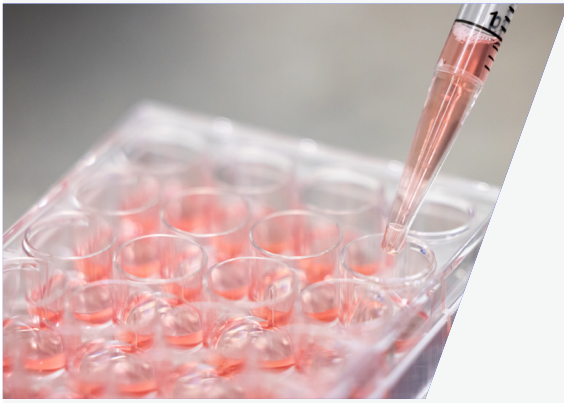
In 1946, philanthropist Mary Lasker and her colleagues met this challenge, helping to raise more than \$4 million for the American Cancer Society – \$1 million of which was used to establish and fund the organization’s groundbreaking research program. With the aid and assistance of dedicated volunteers like Lasker and many others, our research program began to bear fruit. In 1947, we also began our renowned Cancer Signals campaign, a public education effort about the signs and symptoms of cancer.

Making progress

Around the same time the Cancer Signals campaign began, Dr. Sidney Farber, one of our first research grantees, achieved the first temporary cancer remission in a child with acute leukemia using the drug aminopterin, thus opening the modern era of using chemotherapy for cancer treatment. This was just the beginning of the American Cancer Society’s support of scientists early in their careers, propelling them to make remarkable advances in understanding and treating cancer.

American Cancer Society-funded researchers have contributed to nearly every major cancer research breakthrough we’ve seen in the more than 70 years

since our research program began. They’ve helped establish the link between smoking and cancer, demonstrated the effectiveness of the Pap test, developed cancer-fighting drugs and biological response modifiers such as interferon, dramatically increased the cure rate for childhood leukemia, proven the safety and effectiveness of mammography, and so much more. Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has invested more than \$5 billion in research, recognizing and providing funding for 50 researchers who went on to win the Nobel Prize.



National Cancer Act of 1971

Our advocacy later contributed to the passage of the National Cancer Act in 1971, which granted special funds and authority to expand the National Cancer Institute and revolutionized the war on cancer.

Expanding our reach

In the 1960s and 70s, we began to expand our reach as an organization, working even harder to involve all sectors in our efforts to fight back against the disease.

In the 1960s, our organization was instrumental in the development of the Surgeon General's report on the link between smoking and cancer when early American Cancer Society-sponsored studies confirmed the connection. This upheaval in the perception of smoking laid the groundwork for tobacco control progress – and for the many lives it has saved – that continues today.

With the development of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the American Cancer Society also had to adapt to a new role – that of filling in the gaps of the federal government's focus in areas such as cancer prevention and education.

Likewise, as National Institutes of Health funding for young investigators began to diminish over the years, we have allocated more research grants to that generation, helping promising young medical researchers enter the cancer field. Today, the American Cancer Society is a global leader in the fight against cancer, integrating advocacy, discovery, and direct patient support to measurably improve the lives of cancer patients and their families.

Thanks in part to our work, there are more than 16.9 million people alive in the United States alone who have survived cancer. In addition, the cancer death rate is down 33% since 1991. This equates to more than 3.8 million lives saved between 1991 and 2020 (the most recent year for which statistics are available). And with your support, we will continue our lifesaving mission.

Visit cancer.org/aboutus for more information.



Our core values

At the American Cancer Society these core values guide our way forward:

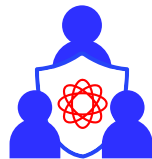
Determination

We demonstrate **determination**, relentlessly pursuing a world without cancer.



Integrity

We work with **integrity** and are driven by truth, ethics, and fact of science.



Diversity

We focus on **diversity**, striving for equity through inclusion and respect.



Compassion

We show **compassion** by caring for and supporting those touched by cancer.



Courage

We display incredible **courage**, undeterred by challenges and bold in action.





What do we do

The American Cancer Society exists because the burden of cancer is unacceptably high. We are the only organization that integrates advocacy, discovery, and direct patient support to measurably improve the lives of cancer patients and their families. And since cancer doesn't affect everyone equally, we are working to ensure everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

Visit cancer.org/volunteer to learn more about opportunities to help us end cancer as we know it, for everyone.



Advocacy

By activating grassroots volunteers nationwide, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM (ACS CAN) fights cancer in city halls, statehouses, and Congress by elevating the patient voice to advance policy change.



Research

The \$400 million in innovative research we fund may start in a lab, but its real impact is felt by the people who benefit from it. Our research studies span the cancer continuum so we can support people with all types of cancer.

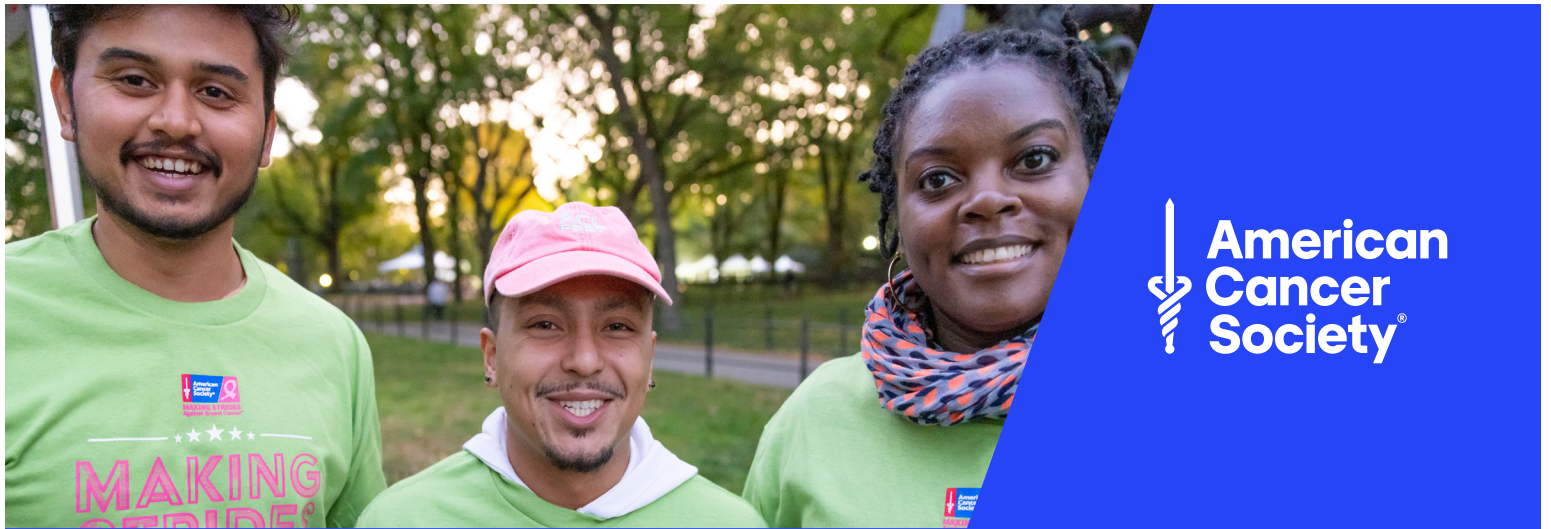


Patient Support

The American Cancer Society ensures no one has to feel alone at any point on their cancer journey, from prevention to survivorship. Through programs like Road To Recovery[®] and our Hope Lodge[®] communities, the American Cancer Society ensures that no one has to walk their cancer journey alone.

Best practices





Our Volunteer–staff partnership

- Volunteer connection with our ACS team members is critical to the progress of the organization at every level.
- The volunteer-staff partnership describes how we work together to accomplish our mission.
- Each volunteer has a different but equally important role.
- Each partnership is built on the relationship between the volunteer and their staff partner. Together, they establish mutually agreed-upon conditions, responsibilities, and actions.

**Volunteers –
the heart and soul of
our organization.**

Components of our partnership



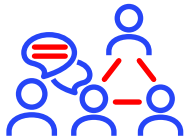
Relationship

Trust, respect and honesty, enjoyment, transparency, flexibility, interest, and knowledge about each other, passion for the mission, valuing the individual, and celebrating diversity



Recruitment

Right fit for the right role, skills and abilities, realistic expectations, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, meaningful work, passion



Training & Support

Onboarding and orientation, required training, policies, rules, boundaries, and non-negotiables, American Cancer Society knowledge, resources and partners, empowerment and preparedness



Accountability

Goals of event or project, impact of success on big picture; policies, rules, boundaries, and non-negotiables; timelines and benchmarks, outlines of roles and responsibilities



Communication

Check-ins, preferred method and frequency of contact, feedback, volunteer communication with the public, media, and other organizations. Updates on policies, projects, etc.



Retention

Growth opportunities, appreciation and value, learning opportunities, career path, role satisfaction



Recognition

Feedback, meaningful thanks, award nomination, appreciation and value, value to the organization

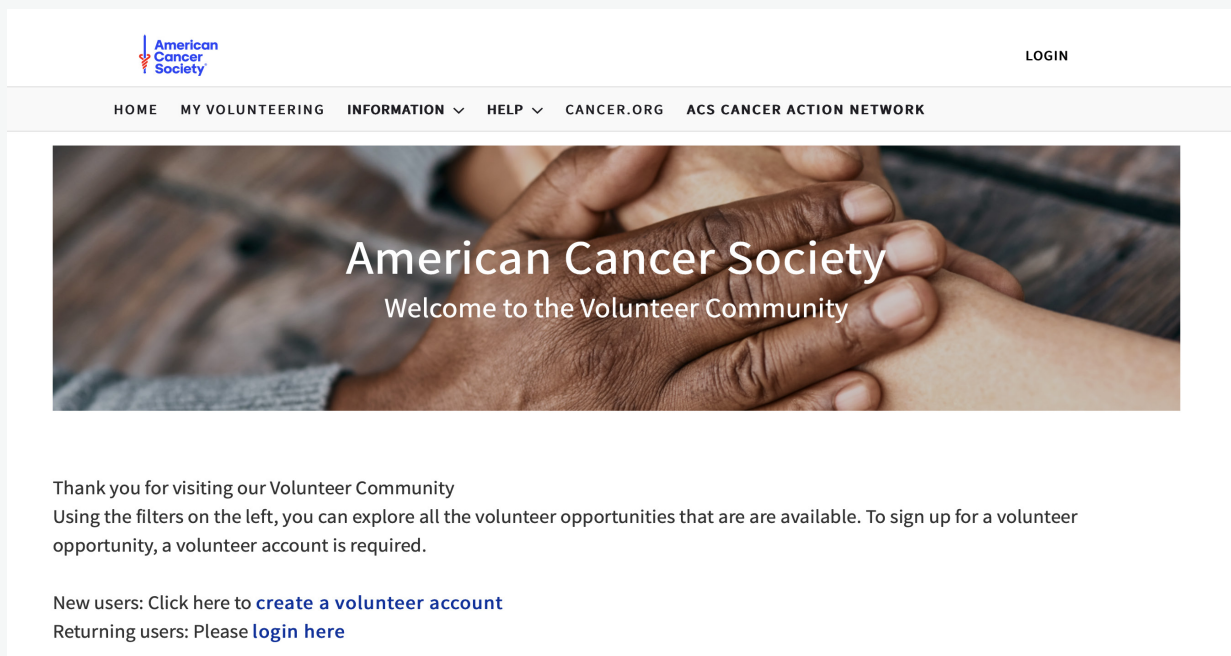


The Volunteer Community

The Volunteer Community is an online portal that allows volunteers to learn more about the American Cancer Society, search and sign up for available volunteer roles, and complete online training and compliance requirements for the roles they select.

What can volunteers do in the Volunteer Community? Volunteers are able to:

- Search for opportunities using filters for geography, date, program type, and more. They can create a Society Account (or use their existing Society Account) to sign up for opportunities.
- Immediately access and begin required training upon sign up.
- Share opportunities in their community with family and friends.
- Interact with ACS easily via mobile phone or tablet.





Code of conduct

Just as we hold each other accountable to the volunteer-staff partnership, we also hold each other accountable to our code of conduct.

Mutual respect

The American Cancer Society is committed to an environment of mutual respect and a valuing and celebrating of differences. Diversity is a process of valuing differences in people through actions. These differences include race, ethnicity, gender identity, physical ability, sexual orientation, economic status, and culture. Diversity strengthens our mission-driven programs and services developed by our volunteers and staff, as well as our public perception and our interpersonal and organizational activities. Creating an inclusive environment where all people are appreciated and have opportunities to give and learn will prepare our greatest asset – our people – to continue meeting and exceeding our lifesaving goals in the future.

Good stewardship

Serving in a volunteer position requires good judgment and management of reasonable risks. All volunteers will be given a general company orientation and a specific training to understand and manage the risks in carrying out their specific jobs. Volunteers will be required to comply with company policy and to conduct American Cancer Society business at the direction of the organization and within the scope of their duties as a volunteer. This will help minimize the risk of liability to the American Cancer Society and reduce the risk of injury (physical or economic) to the volunteer and the people the volunteer associates with or attempts to assist.

Please click [here](#) to view the full volunteer code of conduct.

American Cancer Society activities with inherent risks include the transportation of cancer patients; interacting with youth; organizing fundraising events (athletic or social); assisting ACS team members in carrying out office duties; or serving in a governance role, on a committee, or in a leadership role. We offer specific company procedures and manuals to guide the volunteer in conducting these activities in a safe manner.

The American Cancer Society indemnifies its volunteers against liability incurred while performing their volunteer duties conducted at the request of the organization. The American Cancer Society purchases and maintains insurance policies, wherein volunteers are additional insureds, to provide the financial ability to fully indemnify, defend, and settle any claims of liability.

Discrimination or harassment

No volunteer or employee, vendor, or contractor, may be harassed or otherwise discriminated against on the basis of gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use

Business-related activities must be conducted free from the influence of alcohol and illegal drugs. In addition, these substances may not be possessed or distributed on American Cancer Society premises. During business functions where alcohol is served, volunteers and employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

Tobacco use on American Cancer Society premises, vehicles, at American Cancer Society functions, and while representing the organization at any time or function is prohibited.

Attendance and punctuality

The American Cancer Society requests volunteers and staff be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled volunteer activities. While the organization will attempt to be flexible in all cases, volunteers are expected to notify a staff member if you will be absent or late, so arrangements can be made for handling your responsibilities.

Reimbursement of expenses

The basic premise of volunteerism is that individuals serve with no expectation of monetary gain. It is not expected however, that a volunteer suffer financial hardship arising from their involvement with American Cancer Society activities. Reimbursement of travel expenses to select business functions is outlined in the [ACS Travel and Expense Policy](#). A volunteer may prefer to report such expenses as a charitable contribution to the American Cancer Society for tax purposes.



Protecting our constituents

Privacy

The American Cancer Society is committed to protecting the privacy of all our constituents. People with cancer, caregivers, donors, health care providers, and others across the country and the world provide information to us, and they do so with the expectation that we will protect their data. As an American Cancer Society volunteer, you play a critical role in our efforts to ensure that we meet the expectations of our constituents and our obligations under privacy laws and regulations.

Through your volunteer service to the American Cancer Society, you may come into contact with sensitive personal information about constituents, including patients, donors, and event participants. It is important that you understand how to protect this information. To assist you, we have developed an on-demand Privacy Training to educate you on the importance of privacy and American Cancer Society policies and guidelines.

Below are some highlights of American Cancer Society privacy guidelines. Please review these guidelines carefully and make certain that you follow them as you collect, use, and share constituent information.

Constituent information

Depending on your volunteer role for the American Cancer Society, you may have access to sensitive information regarding constituents. For example, for our events, we collect personal information from participants such as contact information and relationship to cancer. This information is useful for event purposes and helps us let participants know about special activities for caregivers and survivors. In connection with our patient support programs, we may use information such as cancer diagnosis or treatment in order to provide appropriate assistance and support to patients and caregivers. All constituent information is confidential and must be safeguarded.

You may only use and share constituent information to fulfill your volunteer role. And you should always limit your use and disclosure of information to the “minimum necessary amount” that you actually require to accomplish your task. Never share any constituent information with anyone who is not affiliated with the American Cancer Society.

Cancer stories are very powerful. And we encourage you to share your own story about how cancer may have touched your life. However, each individual’s story, including status as a cancer survivor, is a very personal and private matter and must be treated confidentially. As an American Cancer Society volunteer, it is never appropriate to share another person’s story or survivorship status without their express permission.

Donor privacy

Protecting the privacy of our donors is also critically important to the American Cancer Society. It is common to recognize the generosity of donors who have helped to organize or support an event. We request that you make the donor aware that you would like to recognize their efforts and get permission. Do not announce donation amounts unless you have permission from the donor. Some donors may wish to remain anonymous, and you must honor such a request.

Any financial information of donors, including paper checks or credit/debit card numbers, require extra protection due to the risk of identity theft. In addition, most state laws include requirements organizations must meet to protect such information and report potential breaches. You must strictly adhere to American Cancer Society policies for the collection and handling of such information.



American Cancer Society Proprietary Information

American Cancer Society processes and information such as policies, procedures, and constituent, donor, and volunteer lists are confidential and proprietary. You may only use, collect, and share this proprietary information as it relates to your volunteer duties. Any other use is prohibited.

Use care with conversations

You should always use your utmost care whenever you engage in conversations with constituents that may include a discussion of health or other personal information. Take simple steps such as avoiding conversations in front of other people or in public places, lowering your voice, and not using full names to help protect privacy. Be aware of your surroundings and take whatever reasonable precautions you believe are appropriate to keep the information you are discussing confidential.

Use care with messages

Use caution when you leave a message on a constituent's voicemail or answering machine, since you do not know who may hear the message. If you must leave a message, limit it to your name, your affiliation with the American Cancer Society, and your contact information, and ask for the constituent to return your call. Do not mention the specific purpose of the call on your "first try."

Use data securely

When sharing information, follow simple steps to maximize security of transmission. For instance, when mailing documents, use a method that tracks delivery and write the word "confidential" on the outside of the envelope. When using a fax machine, alert the recipient that you will be sending a fax, verify the fax number prior to sending the fax, use a cover sheet, and check the confirmation page to know the fax was received.

Whenever possible, do not send sensitive information over the Internet. Both email and text messaging are generally unsecured. If you must transmit sensitive data over the Internet, use encryption. Many email programs offer the ability to encrypt messages. Check the “TO” line/number to make sure you have the correct email address/digits and you are sending the information to the correct person or people. Never include any personal information in the subject line.

Protect your files

Protect your paper and electronic files containing personal constituent information by limiting access. Follow these steps to help secure your files:

- Keep personal information in locked drawers or cabinets, or out of sight when not in use.
- Carefully secure files when carrying them in your car, to and from meetings, or to American Cancer Society events.
- Save electronic files on a password-protected drive using passwords that are not easily guessed.
- Avoid or minimize copies, and protect the copies in the same manner as originals.
- Destroy (shred or tear up) confidential documents once you have finished using them.

Use good computer security practices

If possible, avoid storing American Cancer Society data on non-Society equipment. If you access constituent information on your smartphone and/or tablet, please password-protect your device. If you use a personal computer to access American Cancer Society data, use common computer security measures to safeguard that information and delete all data once no longer needed. Here are a few basic tips:

- Use password protection – don’t share your password, don’t write it down, and avoid “common” passwords such as your name.
- When you step away from your device, make sure to log off.
- Be careful with files you download from the internet, since the files may contain a virus. Only download what you trust.
- Keep your software up to date, particularly your operating system and antivirus software.

Report suspected privacy incidents ASAP

Privacy breaches can be disastrous to both individuals and the American Cancer Society. Reporting incidents helps to reduce our risk by eliminating further breaches. It also permits individuals to take action quickly to reduce any harm to them.

Report any situation or conduct that you believe violates an applicable privacy law, regulation, or our privacy policy. You do not need to know the exact law or requirement, or be certain a violation has or will occur. When in doubt, the better course of action is to report. Let us know about:

- Lost or stolen electronic devices such as laptops, smartphones, or portable devices if they contain personal information
- Lost or stolen documents, checks, credit/debit card receipts, or other files that contain personal health or account information
- Confidential emails or faxes sent to the wrong person or people
- Breach of an email or event website account (such as account takeover) when the account has access to personal information

Report privacy incidents or concerns to your staff partner, your local or regional office, or contact the American Cancer Society's anonymous hotline at 1-800-539-7202.

Visit cancer.org/privacy to view the American Cancer Society's privacy policy.



Resources & Links

- [The Volunteer Community](#)
- [MySocietySource.org](#)
- youtube.com/user/AmerCancerSociety
- facebook.com/AmericanCancerSociety
- twitter.com/AmericanCancer
- instagram.com/americancancersociety/
- linkedin.com/company/american-cancer-society



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“The American Cancer Society is fighting cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We integrate all three to improve the lives of cancer patients and their families in real, tangible ways and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer. Our volunteers, like you, are an integral part of all of our efforts. Whether you are advocating for legislative change, raising funds for research, or driving cancer patients to treatment, you are helping end cancer as we know it, for everyone.”

Brant Woodward
Senior Executive Vice President, Field Operations



Every cancer. Every life.