



Shop Volunteer Guidebook

May 2025

Hello and welcome to the Street Collective!

Thank you for volunteering with us! In this guidebook, you will find the answers to many questions you may have about how things work around here. If you can't find the answer to something in here, you may always ask one of our friendly and knowledgeable staff.

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Values and Code of Conduct

Values

The Street Collective Community Bike Shop is a program of the Street Collective. The shop is a community space and welcomes all participants equally and enthusiastically. Our values:

- **We serve the community.** We give away over 500 bikes to children and people in need. [add language from end - note about donated items.]
- **We welcome all.** We strive to be a welcoming place for everyone, regardless of race, religion, creed, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, education level, marital or familial status, physical or mental ability, or other personal characteristics. Be kind to others. We do not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination.
- **We learn and teach.** We want people to exchange lessons and teach each other to improve the function and safety of bicycling. [add language about learning from below]
- **We practice safety.** While injuries can happen, we strive to make the shop as safe of a place as possible. Some tools and areas will be restricted to staff and experienced volunteers for this reason. Additionally, weapons and drugs are banned from the shop space, regardless of any licensing or other considerations.

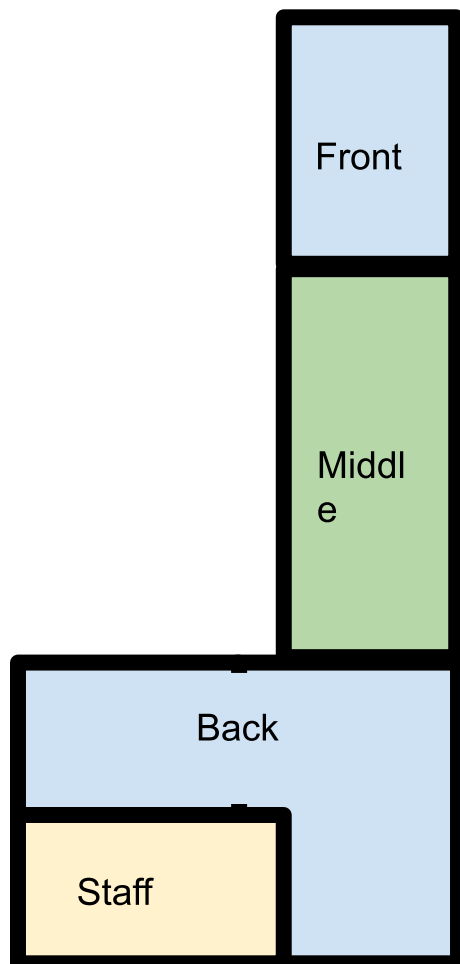
With these values in mind, here are some ways you can help make the Street Collective community bike shop welcoming for all:

- Welcome everyone to our shop and help them understand what we are all about;
- Strive to assist each person according to their interest, level of bike experience, and needs, without assumptions based on personal characteristics;
- Allow individuals to develop skills at their own pace; offer assistance only if help is requested or if a task is too difficult or dangerous for someone to do alone;
- If someone looks confused, lost, or uncomfortable, offer support in a respectful manner suitable to the situation;
- Respect personal boundaries: avoid touching others without consent. Harassment, discrimination, offensive language, or threatening behavior—whether intentional or subtle—will not be tolerated. If you witness or experience anything that seems disrespectful or makes someone uncomfortable, speak up or report it to a staff member. Staff are trained to respond appropriately.

Thank you for helping everyone feel welcome and respected. If you have ideas about how to make the Des Moines Street Collective Bike Shop a better and more welcoming place for all, please share them with a staff person at any time. As a collective, the shop works best when everyone contributes.

Shop Layout and Tool Storage

The shop is organized into four areas: the Front, the Middle, the Back, and Staff Area.



The Front Area. The Front is the sales floor. This is the area where the shopping customers hang out and where we keep ready-to-sell refurbished bikes. This is also where you bring finished donation bikes that are ready to get cataloged and sent out. Donations will normally come through the front door, so if you aren't sure what to do and staff are busy helping others, you can always help keep the front clear of donations so that people and bikes can get into and out of the shop easily.

The Middle Area. This is where you'll spend most of your time as a volunteer. Workstations are along the south wall and numbered 1–4 (look for the number on top of each station). Stations 1 and 2 are for staff; stations 3–6 are open for public and volunteer use. The unnumbered stations along the north wall are best for bike breakdowns—they have fewer specialty tools, which leaves stations 3 and 4 open for builds.

Please leave your station better than you found it. Match tools to the outlines on the backboard, wipe down your bench with Simple Green, and put away all tools and parts. If tools are missing when you

arrive, let a staff member know.

Most extra tools are in the black toolbox under the volunteer computer. Some require staff supervision—if you're unsure how to use something, just ask. Return all tools promptly to keep them available and easy to find.

Back Area. Unfinished bikes are stored in the Back. In general, bikes are separated between adult and childrens' bikes, and potential sale versus potential donation bikes. Bikes are tagged with sheets of colored paper according to whether they have been:

- Sold; whether they will be
- Disassembled for parts;
- Refurbished and brought to working condition for donation;
- Refurbished for sale on the sales floor.

The color-coding system is posted both in the back on a post and in the middle section on the black cabinet on the south wall of the shop.

The bike wash area, the washing machine, the scrap corral, and the tire recycling are all found in the back. We try to keep clear walkways between each line of bikes and to each area of the shop. These aisles often need to be maintained; an easy way to contribute is to help maintain the tidiness of the unfinished bike area.

The Staff Area. The Staff Area is closed to all non-staff unless invited by a staff member. Overstock new parts, including cables and housing, are stored in the pantry marked “Fun Zone.” If you need more of these items, please notify a staff member and they will retrieve them for you. Parts in the pantry are generally reserved for bike builds and are not for sale to the general public. A back area past the garage door in the back is used for storage and other staff activities. There is no need for volunteers to go into this area unless asked to do so by Shop Staff.

Volunteer Priorities

There are always tasks to be done – no matter your ability or skill level. There are four primary volunteer activities, and who does what is usually based on experience as a mechanic. These include:

- Organizing the shop
- Breaking down bikes
- Building kid bikes
- Building adult bikes

We understand that many of you are here to learn more about bikes, and we are here to help turn you into a master mechanic, but it all depends on your level of engagement. Ask questions! We are all always learning here.

Organizing the shop

Keeping the shop clean and organized is a constant challenge—and your help makes a big difference.

Clean your station before leaving. Return all tools to their proper place.

General shop tasks like moving bikes, cleaning, and organizing are often needed—feel free to jump in or ask where help is needed.

Parts sorting is ongoing. Milk crates often fill up with mixed-quality parts. If you know how to tell good from bad (and have staff approval), help by removing broken or unusable parts. This keeps things efficient for builders.

Wheel work: If you know how—or want to learn—repacking hubs or truing wheels, we have plenty that need attention. The wheels hanging in the Middle are a great place to start.

Breaking down bikes

New volunteers often start by disassembling donated bikes. Since we accept almost anything bike-related, many donations are unusable and need to be taken apart for parts and recycling. This task helps you get comfortable with the repair stand, tools, and how bikes are put together—important skills for future tasks.

Look for tagged bikes marked for disassembly. If you're not sure which tags mean what, ask a staff member.

The goal:

- Save usable parts (ask staff if unsure).
- Recycle the rest
- Leave a bare frame, but keep large pieces together to speed up recycling runs.
- Don't fully disassemble handlebars or small assemblies—remove them as units when possible.
- Loosen bolts to slide parts off; if you must remove one, screw it back in afterward.

Sorting parts:

- Scrapped metal parts → paint buckets at each stand.
- Reusable parts, wheels, and tires → sorting boxes.
- Tubes and tires → separate for recycling.

Most bikes take 30–60 minutes to break down. When in doubt, ask

Building Kids Bikes

After you've taken apart a few bikes and gotten comfortable with the tools, you'll move on to rebuilding kids bikes. This is a great way to learn the four key bearing systems:

1. Front hub
2. Rear hub
3. Headset
4. Bottom bracket

Kids bikes rarely have brakes or gears with cables, making them perfect for beginners. You'll find a pile of fixer-upper kids bikes in the middle of the shop—most are rebuilt for our big summer giveaway events (which you can also volunteer for!).

To rebuild a kids bike:

1. Strip it down to the frame (just like during disassembly).
2. A staff member or experienced volunteer will guide you through cleaning and re-greasing the bearings.
3. Reassemble the bike.

Once you're confident with bearing systems, you'll move on to adult bikes with cables.

Building Adult Bikes

Adult bikes (for this guide) are those with cable-actuated brakes and derailleurs. In addition to the four bearing systems (hubs, headset, bottom bracket), they have four cable systems: Front/rear brakes and Front/rear derailleurs

These bikes take more time and skill to rebuild. They'll either be sold or donated. Only begin one if you have the time to finish it—we can't store half-finished bikes for more than a week. If you leave a project too long, staff may reassign it to someone else.

Getting started:

- Staff will let you know when you're ready to move up from kids bikes.
- Be patient—adult bikes come in many varieties and require more learning.

When you're ready:

- Check the whiteboard behind the front desk and the sign-in computer for high-priority bikes. Always prioritize these.
- Choose bikes from the outer edge of the fixer pile to avoid damaging others or needing to restack everything.

With patience and persistence, you'll gain the skills to become a full bike mechanic!

Shop Programs

Open Shop Bench Time: Use one of our benches to work on your own bike with assistance as needed from staff and volunteers. This is available to the general public for a per hour fee or included with a Collective yearly membership. We are a Do it Yourself shop so do not expect someone to “fix it for you.” Instead our staff and volunteers will assist you in learning how to repair and complete your bike maintenance.

Earn-a-Bike (EAB) Program: Volunteers who have completed 25 hours of service in a year will earn either \$250 of store credit towards a bike that has already been refurbished (“floor bike”), or may build a bike from parts and materials in the shop. This program refreshes each year; a volunteer may earn another bike every year but hours earned in a previous year do not count toward the current year. EAB does not apply to parts or accessories ordered from a distributor and the shop reserves the right to set aside bikes or accessories to make them inaccessible for EAB (for example, particularly valuable framesets can’t be used in an EAB build).

- **Minors:** In order to encourage more people to ride, minors (people under the age of 18) participating in EAB have a truncated 10 hr timeline for EAB. Other volunteer milestones remain unchanged.

Other volunteering milestones:

- **10 hrs:** Volunteers completing 10 hours of service receive a shop t-shirt to thank them for their efforts and to wear at the shop in place of a t-shirt that they might not want ruined. The shop manager will ask for your t-shirt size when you have completed this milestone. Volunteers who have reached this milestone also receive free bench time during open hours.
- **15 hrs:** Fifteen hours of volunteer service earns a shop discount of 50% off donated items. Refurbished bikes and new items do not qualify for the discount. Similarly to the EAB program, the shop reserves the right to “embargo” certain high-value items, placing them out of bounds.
- **20 hrs:** Longer-term volunteers receive access to the shop’s distributor accounts, such as Quality Bike Products. Products ordered through these distributors must be paid on arrival. Volunteers receive the same discount as employees, paying the wholesale cost of the item plus a percentage based upon volunteer level. This discount is **only** for personal use and may not be shared with friends, family, or sainted grandparents.
- **25 hrs:** At 25 hours, volunteers earn a bike! See above.

Community Service: We accept those completing community service hours required by other groups such as the Justice and Education Systems. We require all Community Service Volunteers to complete the Volunteer Application prior to volunteering in the shop. Hours used toward Community Service requirements do not count towards the Earn-a-Bike program.

Minors and Dependent Adult Policies

Volunteers Under 18

Ages 14 and up may volunteer on their own

Under 14 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult who stays within arm's reach.

If a minor is disruptive or unsafe, staff may ask them and their adult to leave.

Dependent Adult Volunteers

- Dependent adults (18+) needing support are welcome with a caregiver or responsible adult.
- That adult must remain with and assist them during their entire shift. If not, both may be asked to leave

Volunteer Levels and Requirements

There are four levels of volunteer: **Beginner, Intermediate, Expert, and Core**. Each level includes progressive responsibility. To ensure a welcoming environment we require all intermediate or higher volunteers to complete a volunteer application. Volunteer benefits and the Earn-A-Bike are not available to those completing Community Service Hours.

Beginner: A Beginner volunteer has less than 20 hours on record. Most of the 20 hours will be breaking down bikes, sorting parts, and/or organizing the shop. Beginner volunteers are eligible for the standard Earn-a-Bike program, but not eligible for additional benefits.

Intermediate: An Intermediate volunteer has 20-40+ hours on record and kinda-sorta knows what they're doing. An intermediate volunteer can disassemble and possibly re-grease a full bike with assistance, and may be asked by staff or higher level volunteers to assist other volunteers or customers. If you are not comfortable with a request please let a staff member know. You will never be asked to complete a task outside of your comfort zone. Intermediate volunteers are eligible for a 20% discount on used parts from the shop and free bench time. With progressive responsibility and the potential for assisting others, Intermediate volunteers and higher must complete a volunteer application, which includes emergency contact and other background information.

Expert: An Expert volunteer has over 40 hours on record. Experts can rebuild an adult bike with only needing to ask a few questions. Experts are eligible for a 30% discount on used parts, free bench time, and cost+20% on new parts ordered from any of our wholesale accounts. Has a blue name tag.

Master: Master volunteers have a whole bunch of hours donated to the shop, and may sometimes be mistaken for “the owner.” Masters are eligible for steep discounts on used merchandise, cost +10% on parts ordered from distributors, and outside open hours access to the shop. Has a Green name tag.

A Note About Donated Items: The Street Collective is a mission-driven organization that serves the community. We depend on the goodwill of donations - bicycles and funding. If our community perceives that staff or volunteers are claiming the best parts before the public has the opportunity to purchase or used on donated bikes, then that goodwill will rightly disappear. Everything that comes into the shop must be available to the public for a minimum of one week before it can be purchased by volunteers or employees. This applies to entire bicycles, parts, apparel, and other supplies. We are here to serve the community and not about feeding our personal bike habits.