



SAVE 

*Student Ambassadors for
Virginia's Environment*

Handbook



2 2
0 0
2 2
5 6

Keep Virginia Beautiful

www.keepvirginiabeautiful.org



Table of Contents

- Welcome Message
- About Keep Virginia Beautiful
- Expectations
- Activity Requirements
- Social Media
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Actions
- Ambassador Commitment Agreement

Welcome Aboard!

Welcome to the Keep Virginia Beautiful SAVE (Student Ambassadors for Virginia's Environment) Program! We are delighted to have you join our program that involves teens in our mission to improve Virginia's scenic and natural environment.

We are so excited to get to know you and to support your growth as an environmental leader in your community. We will strive to ensure that our time together is meaningful (and fun!); to provide useful learning and networking opportunities; and to inspire, engage, and empower you to help keep Virginia clean, green, and beautiful.

We are honored to have you as a SAVE Ambassador, and we will strive to create an environment that fosters cooperation, collaboration, and support to best serve you during your ambassadorship. We are grateful that you have decided to devote your time, energy, and efforts to help support our mission in your local community.

This handbook is a guide for the policies, expectations and practices that are in place to support all SAVE Ambassadors at Keep Virginia Beautiful. You are responsible for reading the handbook in its entirety, agreeing to abide by it, and retaining it for future reference. We recognize that there may be situations and questions that are not addressed, and if you have questions about this material or a particular situation, please don't hesitate to email me at clawton@keepvirginiabeautiful.org. My door is always open, and our staff and I are committed to helping you have a successful and productive SAVE ambassadorship!

In partnership,



Cristi Lawton
Executive Director





About Us

The mission of Keep Virginia Beautiful (KVB) is to engage and unite Virginians to improve the Commonwealth's natural and scenic environment. We believe in a shared responsibility to end littering, improve recycling, and beautify communities.

KVB has helped thousands of individuals and organizations with litter, recycling, and beautification projects across Virginia through initiatives such as Green Grants, The Great American Cleanup, and the Cigarette Litter Prevention and Recycling Program. KVB has also provided marketing support to the state's Adopt-a-Highway volunteer litter pick up program.

KVB is a state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB) and supports local affiliates in Virginia. It has a longstanding history of accomplishments and collaborates with allied partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sector to make vital environmental improvements.

In 2023, KVB celebrated its 70th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, KVB engaged in several new initiatives, including developing a new pilot youth education program - SAVE (Student Ambassadors for Virginia's Environment). The pilot began in January 2024 and concluded in June 2024. 23 Ambassadors were selected to participate in the pilot, and its initial success prompted the program's continuation and expansion for the 2024/2025 school year. Over 30 Ambassadors participated in this first full year of SAVE, and we are excited to offer the program again for the 2025/2026 school year.

SAVE is modeled after best practice ambassador programs administered by other state Keep America Beautiful affiliates. The program will utilize the Keep America Beautiful (KAB) 5-step behavior change model. Short-term outcomes are that Ambassadors become better stewards in both their schools and localities, and as part of a greater community of Ambassadors. SAVE ultimately aspires to develop civic leaders that will become life-long champions who advocate for Virginia's natural and scenic environment.



END LITTERING



IMPROVE RECYCLING



BEAUTIFY COMMUNITIES



Being a **SAVE Ambassador**

Objectives

Every SAVE Ambassador has the following obligations and must agree to these requirements to the best of their ability. These objectives are:

- Complete 9 months and 20 hours of volunteer service as a SAVE Ambassador (September 2025 - May 2026).
- Represent and uphold the mission and values of Keep Virginia Beautiful.
- Attend the required program orientation, review and sign the Ambassador Handbook, and complete a photo release form.
- Attend required virtual workshops throughout the year (workshops will be recorded and can be viewed later if needed).
- Organize and participate in at least one litter clean up event and submit a cleanup report.
- Complete one community project and showcase that project by the end of the program year OR organize and participate in an additional litter clean up.
- Make an effort to attend any in person meetings and/or field trips.
- Share a profile picture for SAVE publication. Share at least one picture of your SAVE activities with us and on your personal social media and tag Keep Virginia Beautiful.
- Provide input and feedback about your experience to help us improve the program.



Attendance

At the beginning of the SAVE Program each selected ambassador will be required to attend a virtual orientation. At this meeting, ambassadors will have the opportunity to meet each other and KVB staff, learn more about the program, review guidelines and expectations, and ask any questions. If an ambassador is unable to attend, a video recording will be provided.

Virtual Workshops to provide learning and networking opportunities will also be offered throughout the program. Ambassadors are required to attend these workshops or listen to video recordings of them.

Activity Requirements



Workshops



Throughout your term as a SAVE Ambassador, multiple virtual workshops will be offered as opportunities to learn more about topics related to litter, recycling, and community beautification. These will also be opportunities to network with and learn from other Ambassadors and presenters. It is recommended that Ambassadors attend these meetings when they occur. However, if there are schedule conflicts, Ambassadors may listen to the recordings. Participation in workshops counts as volunteer time.

Cleanups



One of KVB's main objectives is to address and prevent litter. Community litter cleanups are a key way we accomplish this work. As an Ambassador, you are responsible for organizing at least one cleanup in your community, with at least 5 participants and a minimum of 2 hours in duration for each event. You may partner with a local affiliate or other organization. KVB can provide cleanup supplies and advice. Pictures must be shared on your social media; a litter tally sheet is required to note types and quantities of litter collected; and a cleanup report should be submitted with details about the event, including date, location, bags of trash collected, number of volunteers, and hours worked. All participants will be expected to sign a volunteer liability waiver and media release form.

Community Project



As an ambassador in your community, it is important to display your knowledge and commitment to the environment through the completion of one community education project. As an alternative, you may also conduct an additional litter cleanup. Projects can be completed on your own, in partnership with another organization, and/or with other ambassadors. The project should relate to litter, recycling, or community beautification and include a public education component. Each ambassador will showcase their project at an end-of-year virtual meeting.

Social Media



Posts

Ambassadors are required to post at least one social media post, with a picture(s), for each litter clean up event they organize and participate in. In addition, ambassadors are encouraged to post about their community project and other ambassador activities. Please tag @keepvirginiabeautiful and use the hashtags #KVBSAVE and #KeepVABeautiful. We also ask that posts be made viewable to the public (for example, Instagram accounts are made public or Facebook posts are made public). Short videos of activities (for example Facebook reels or Tiktok videos) are also acceptable as social media posts.

Ambassadors are encouraged to follow Keep Virginia Beautiful's social media accounts as well. Ambassadors' activities and the SAVE program will be featured on the organization's social media platforms.

Etiquette

You are a SAVE Ambassador and a Keep Virginia Beautiful representative no matter where you are, even online. Everything you write or say related to our organization may be treated or viewed as if you are representing Keep Virginia Beautiful. Please use your best judgment in representing Keep Virginia Beautiful and the SAVE Program online. Always use common sense regarding privacy, and don't post confidential or proprietary information, or collect sensitive information through social media.

If you are aware of false or negative mentions of Keep Virginia Beautiful or receive a direct inquiry that you believe is best suited to be handled by someone else, please make the Executive Director (Cristi Lawton, clawton@keepvirginiabeautiful.org) aware of the situation and get prior approval before responding in any way. We encourage you to share information about SAVE, however, if social media correspondence becomes negative or questions are asked that are specific to Keep Virginia Beautiful, please refer the conversation to the Executive Director.

Code of Conduct



All SAVE Ambassadors are required to comply with the code of conduct at all times when participating in program activities. Any ambassador who observes a breach of the code of conduct has responsibility to report the misbehavior to staff. Any violations will be reviewed and the situation documented by staff, who will then make a decision on whether the participant can continue serving as an ambassador.

Activity Requirements

Ambassadors are expected to comply with the activity requirements as noted in the handbook, and to participate for the full school year of the program (September 2025 - May 2026). This includes participation in workshops, organizing two litter clean up events, conducting a community project, social media postings, and providing feedback about the program. These activities can all count toward the requirement to complete at least 20 hours of service as an ambassador, and a volunteer timesheet will be provided for completion. If an ambassador is experiencing challenges with the activity requirements, they will let staff know as soon as possible.

Behavior Expectations

Ambassadors are responsible for their behavior and shall refrain from harassing, intimidating, or bullying others. Likewise, ambassadors can expect staff will maintain a program free of harassment. This includes written, verbal, or physical conduct which would interfere with a professional working environment. Harassment in any form which creates an intimidating or offensive environment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by applicable law will not be tolerated. Ambassadors are expected to be collegial, professional, and inclusive by welcoming and supporting people of all backgrounds and identities throughout their participation in the program.

Ambassadors will not use tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal substances at any program or event.

Ambassadors will not carry a weapon or threaten another person with bodily force or language.

Ambassadors will dress appropriately to the occasion and adhere to any attire requirements stipulated for events they are attending.

Ambassadors will follow safety precautions and best practices for litter clean up activities and events.



Disciplinary Actions

SAVE Ambassadors are highly motivated, mature, ethical, and dependable individuals with a passion for environmental stewardship. Problems requiring disciplinary actions are not expected. The SAVE Program is geared toward service, leadership, and excellence. As such, we expect ambassadors to reflect these priorities and to maintain the utmost respect for yourself, others, and your surroundings at all time.

Failure to Comply with Guidelines

If any ambassador fails to comply with any of the guidelines set forth by the SAVE Program, then the ambassador will have the opportunity to explain their actions to the KVB staff supervising the program. The guidelines include information in this handbook and any other guidelines set forth throughout the course of the program.

All ambassadors will receive one warning if they do not fulfill an obligation or miss an event for which they were expected to attend. If this occurs a second time, the situation will be reviewed with the ambassador and staff. The result may be probation or termination.

A written summary of the problem will be made and kept on file, as this may affect any future ambassador applications.

If an ambassador is dismissed from the program, they will not be able to reapply for the program in the future and are no longer eligible to represent Keep Virginia Beautiful.

Ambassador

Commitment Agreement

I will support Keep Virginia Beautiful and the SAVE Program by using my time, talents, and resources to further the organization's mission to improve Virginia's scenic and natural environment through a shared responsibility to end litter, improve recycling, and beautify communities.

As a SAVE Ambassador, I will:

- Commit to serve for the entirety of the program, September 2025 - June 2026, and complete at least 20 hours of service.
- Strive to attend and participate in all required virtual workshops associated with the program. If this is not possible, I will listen to recordings provided afterward. I understand that reviewing any AI Bot notes are not acceptable as a substitute for this requirement. I will also try to attend and participate in any in-person meetings or field trips in my region.
- Help plan and participate in at least one litter cleanup in my community. These events will be at least two hours in duration and include at least five volunteers, including myself. I will report results and post at least one social media post with at least one picture for each clean up.
- Complete one community project about litter, recycling, and/or community beautification that will educate my community about this issue(s), and be prepared to showcase that project in my community and with other ambassadors in a virtual workshop. As an alternative and in lieu of the community project, I can plan and participate in a second litter cleanup in my community, with the same requirements as the first one.
- Support Keep Virginia Beautiful, its mission, and the SAVE Program through learning, collaboration, and educating others to take positive action to help keep Virginia beautiful.
- Abide by the code of conduct and all activity requirements. I will resign my ambassador position in the event these responsibilities cannot be upheld.

Keep Virginia Beautiful will provide me with tools, resources, and information necessary to ensure my success as a SAVE Ambassador.

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____