

The Phoenix Center at Auraria Helpline Advocate Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible to volunteer?

Anyone can volunteer as a Helpline Advocate with The Phoenix Center at Auraria (PCA); students, faculty, and staff from any school on campus, as well as individuals who are community members and are not otherwise affiliated with the school.

2. Can this volunteer position count towards an academic internship?

Yes. To set up an internship, either contact your institution's internship office, or your academic department.

3. If I volunteer on the Helpline for an internship, will the entire time I am on call count towards my hours?

This depends on how your internship advisor and faculty administrator choose to count your hours. For example, if you are on-call for a 24-hour shift, some programs will allow you to receive credit for 24 hours; some will count half of the time (12 hours); while others will only count the time that you actually were speaking to a caller. We encourage you to ask for all hours while you are on-call to count toward your internship, as your on-call requirements are the same as in-office requirements (*no travel more than 30 minutes outside of the area, no alcohol consumption, responsibility for answering the phone at all times, providing on-scene response when requested, completing necessary paperwork, no loud environments*). This negotiation has to take place between you and your internship advisor.

4. If I choose to use this volunteer position as an internship, are there any additional opportunities to gain hours?

Yes. In addition to the hours you complete on-call with the Helpline, The Phoenix Center at Auraria can offer additional hours volunteering in the office during regular business hours (depending on need and availability). In-office activities may include staffing the front desk, developing brochures and educational materials, participating in campus awareness events/tabling opportunities, going to classes and talking about PCA, the Helpline, and volunteer opportunities, etc. Please discuss this with the Associate Director to determine availability of office duties. If you cannot commit to set office hours, there are also additional opportunities to assist with various campus events. The Associate Director will email these opportunities to all Helpline Advocates as they arise.

5. Where do I answer phones if I become a Helpline advocate?

Our Helpline service is done by cell phone. You will not be working out of the PCA office. At the start of your shift, you will collect the on-call cell phone from the PCA office and carry it your entire shift. When you are on-call, you carry the cell phone with you at ALL times, answering it when it rings. During this time you are prohibited from using alcohol or other drugs. After your shift ends, you will return the cell phone to the PCA office.

6. How do phone transfers work?

Usually, you will obtain the cell phone at the PCA office on Monday or Thursday afternoon (start of your shift). Shifts will be either Monday-Thursday or Thursday to Monday. You will drop off the phone at the PCA office at the conclusion of your shift between 9am-12 noon and then the next advocate picks up the phone that same day in the afternoon between 12-4pm. The PCA office covers the in between hours. It is permissible to make arrangements with another advocate to exchange the phone elsewhere but you **must** inform the Associate Director that you are doing this.

7. What is on-scene response?

Advocates have occasionally been needed to assist a survivor in person. This is done at the request of a professional from the Auraria Police Department, Denver Health Medical Center, Auraria Health Center, The Inn at Auraria and Campus Village. This may include accompanying a victim to make a police report or get a sexual assault exam at the hospital. At this time, on-scene response is limited to **day time office hours only** (so a staff member can provide back-up assistance if needed). If a caller wishes to meet with an advocate in person, outside these parameters, they may make an appointment with the PCA office staff.

8. Are there always 2 Advocates on-call at a time? If so, do both advocates receive calls from the Helpline?

It is our goal to have 2 advocates on call at the same time for support and back up. However, this depends on the number of active and trained advocates we have available. If we have 2 advocates on call, the primary on-call phone will receive all Helpline calls. The back-up (or secondary) advocate carries a cell phone as well; however, they are only called upon in emergency circumstances.

9. How many shifts and calls will I get?

You may accept as many available on-call shifts as you want. The minimum expectation is at least one shift of primary a month (and one shift of secondary as applicable). You will have the phone 24/7 during your on-call shift. Call amounts vary. On the primary phone you may get no calls an entire shift or it could ring a few times each day. Typically, phone calls last a few minutes, but they could be longer in order to provide support, information, and referrals.

10. What is the time commitment?

- a. Training: 40 hours (held over a period of six weekday evenings and two Saturday all-day sessions)
- b. Time on-call: minimum 1 primary (4 days) a month; total commitment of 1 year.
- c. Monthly Helpline Meetings: typically once a month for 1-2 hours.

11. What if I don't know how to talk to people on the Helpline?

Don't worry, everyone is always nervous for their first handful of calls...but you will gain confidence after your training. You will learn how to talk to callers and answer questions, how to respond to certain situations and help the caller as much as possible. Over time on the Helpline you will become more comfortable. We will make sure you have everything you need before sending you out on the phone.

12. How is the on-call schedule made?

You will sign up for your shifts at the volunteer meeting or over email. The Associate Director will prepare the schedules usually one month at a time.

13. Can I be on-call if I have class?

Many Advocates are on-call even while they are in class. Advocates can notify their professors ahead of time that they are on-call and may need to excuse themselves from class to answer a call. Most professors view service on the Helpline as a great learning and leadership opportunity, and are very accommodating. PCA staff can write letters explaining the volunteer position and requirements upon request.

14. What if I have a test while I am on-call?

You can arrange for another advocate or the PCA office to receive calls during the time period you are taking your test. There are many options including forwarding phone calls, finding alternate coverage, etc. Protocols for this will be covered during training.