



FOUNDATION BEYOND BELIEF

humanism at work

Beyond Belief Network Photo Guidelines

This resource is designed both to provide guidelines for BBN teams' submitted photos to FBB and to provide tips for taking great photos generally. Eye-catching, good photos on your website and social media can make the difference between recruiting a new volunteer or not. Use only your best pictures in your group's newsletter and social media.

Taking conscientious photos

As important as eye-catching photos are, take care to post responsibly. A lot of the work that we do is face-to-face and hand-in-hand with our beneficiaries and it's very important that their dignity, privacy, and rights are preserved. With that in mind, when you have an event with direct beneficiaries present, there are some habits to adopt and some questions to consider.

- **Under no circumstances take anyone's picture without consent.**
- Unless you have consent to do so, do not post photos of beneficiaries where their identities are recognizable. Most often this means taking care not to show their faces, but in some cases they may have distinctive clothing or something else that is highly unique.
- In some cases it may be appropriate to take photos where the beneficiaries of your event are identifiable, but this should — without exception — only be taken with permission. However, take care to recognize that beneficiaries may feel compelled to give permission as an unspoken cost of the service you are offering.



- Putting stickers over a person's face in a photo does not create engaging photos. Here are some ways of taking dynamic photos at your events with direct beneficiaries that do not show faces, but are not explicit about censoring faces.
 - Wide angles and group shots where faces are indistinguishable
 - Photos from behind
 - Interesting angles of isolated body parts (like someone's hands putting an item in their bag or filling a tray with food)
 - Photos where faces are tastefully obscured by an object like a protest sign

The photos you choose tell a story. Pay attention to what story you are telling. Take care to share the real life experiences and challenges beneficiaries experience, while also lifting positive stories.

Photo releases

When it comes to photos of your volunteers, **get permission from your members** for being photographed and for the pictures being shared in promotional material online (both in your social media and ours). Some

people might not want their images used at all, and it's important to know that in advance so you can avoid taking pictures that you can't use. Make sure your volunteer photographer has this information, too. A good trick for making sure that people who haven't given permission don't appear in



photos is to give them a lanyard of a certain colour. Any picture that includes someone wearing one of these lanyards doesn't make it online. You should get explicit permission from every volunteer (and their guardian for minor volunteers) before taking their photos.

Anyone in photos you send to FBB should have signed a photo release form. We have created a form for you to share with them that they can submit as long as they have internet. Have them fill out [this form](#) before or during your event and their release form will be sent to us. The form is designed to be a photo release for both your team and for FBB. When we receive a new photo release, we will add their name to a google spreadsheet that will be shared with you, so you will know who has submitted their release and who hasn't.

Getting the shot

We've all been there. We get home from a great, successful event and we want to share the great work our team has done, only to realize no one took photos. Here are some tips to make sure that doesn't happen again.

1. If you're the volunteer coordinator, you're likely to be pretty busy coordinating, so **try to find a volunteer to be in charge of pictures.** A member who's a professional photographer is a safe bet, but anyone who's passionate about photography would be a good person to pick.
2. **Encourage other members to take pictures,** too, especially to share online.
3. Many phones can take decent quality pictures, so you likely already have the equipment you need. However, **there's a reason that professionals use DSLR cameras,** so if you have one and your event isn't one in which your camera will be relatively safe, consider bringing it. If your volunteer has a good camera, so much the better.
4. **If you're using your phone, use the front-facing camera and check your settings.** Sometimes selfie cams produce a lower resolution image that is difficult to use, and sometimes settings on your phone might automatically compress photos and create unexpected effects.



5. Also **verify that the location allows pictures** (e.g., Red Cross is sometimes leery of letting donors take photographs, organizations might not want their members outed, etc.).
6. If you want your group to wear their BBN t-shirts in the photographs, make sure you submit all of your [event reports](#) to become eligible for your BBN shirts.

Tips for Taking Great Pictures

1. Pay attention to light

- a. Taking pictures in front of windows or into the sun generally shadows faces, even if you can see them clearly through the viewfinder, so keep the brightest light source behind you (or use the flash if your subject is close enough).
- b. Make sure that your shadow or the shadow from a tree or building doesn't fall over your subject or part of your subject.
- c. Use a flash in low light, but watch out for reflective surfaces that can produce glares (e.g., windows, glass over picture frames, etc.).

2. Have a focal point

- a. Keep it simple. It's hard to show an entire scene, so focus instead on one or two people doing one activity.
- b. Keep an eye on what's in the background. You don't want the background to distract from the focal point.
- c. Don't stand too far away; get up close to your subject.

3. Rule of thirds

- a. Imagine that there's a tic-tac-toe grid in your viewfinder (what you can see through the camera focus or on your screen), so that you have three rows and three columns.
- b. The horizon should fall along either the top or bottom row (not the middle row).
- c. If your subject fits in the middle column, turn your camera to the side or move your camera so that the subject is placed at the intersection of two lines.
- d. For a more thorough explanation and examples you can go [here](#).

4. Action shots — These are the best way to tell the story of the hard work you are putting in and the impact you are making.

- a. Set your shutter speed high (fast) so that your image doesn't blur.
- b. Consider using a tripod.
- c. Try the action setting on your camera.
- d. Leave negative space in front of the movement.

- e. Take a short video and select individual frames from the video.

5. Portrait or group shots

- a. Get down so the camera is at eye level with the people you're photographing.
- b. Eyes of the person should be at the intersection of a row and column.
- c. For group shots, get close. Unless their shoes are interesting, there's no need to show more than head and shoulders.
- d. Don't cut off the top of someone's head.
- e. Remember that group portrait shots might be a great option for your group's profile picture, but BBN photo awards are only available for action shots.



Please send us high resolution pictures — at least **1920x1080** if possible. (The better the resolution, the more likely we are to show it — and you — off!) Be aware that sometimes photos are automatically compressed when emailing or texting them, so try to make sure to send the originals in .png format whenever you can.

Questions or Concerns?

If you need help with planning your event or have additional questions, the best way to contact Foundation Beyond Belief is to use the [contact webform](#), which enables us to track the resolution of your question.