

Volunteering with the Yukon Quest

The spirit of the Yukon Quest is a celebration of the history of the North. The trail runs across frozen rivers, climbs four mountain passes, and travels through isolated northern communities. With temperatures often dropping to 40 below, howling winds, snowstorms, open water and jumble ice all working against the teams; the Yukon Quest is a true test of the tenacity of both man and animal. The Yukon Quest serves as a tribute to the historical dependence of man on his sled dogs.

The Yukon Quest is a volunteer effort from beginning to end. This epic 1,000 mile International Sled Dog Race would not be possible without the volunteer efforts of thousands of dedicated individuals, all of whom have lent a hand ... and sometimes much more - over the last 36 years.

We have a very diverse volunteer community from all walks of life including retired travelers in their 70's to local youth donating their time. People from all over the globe, spending from two days to three months helping with the race. For some it is their first-time, others have been coming back for the past 36 years. We attract volunteers who leave this amazing experience as an integral part of the Quest family.

Volunteers traveling long distances usually stay in the areas of Whitehorse or Fairbanks, and volunteer for one or two shifts a day, for as many days as they want. If you go on to volunteer at checkpoints, depending on your interests and skills, we ask for a longer commitment. Volunteers working at checkpoints must be willing and able to work overnight shifts lasting between 8 and 12 hours.

Volunteer Specifics

The Yukon Quest is an event with over 1,000 volunteers. We recognize how crucial our volunteers are to the success of the race. What we offer is the experience of a lifetime and a chance to get connected with this great race. You will receive a 2020 Volunteer Patch, and invitations to Volunteer Appreciation Parties and other Yukon Quest events.

Note that the Yukon Quest does NOT offer free accommodation, transportation or meals.

Volunteer Information

- **Checkpoints:** There are some volunteers who are able to assist at each checkpoint. The volunteer positions required are determined by the location and infrastructure of each checkpoint. Checkpoints on the Yukon side are more easily accessible. Fairbanks requires a large number of volunteers where the race starts. Checkpoints on the Alaska side are more remote. If you are interested in volunteering at a particular checkpoint on the trail, please let us know.
- **Code of Conduct:** The Yukon Quest has a code of conduct for its volunteers, staff, mushers and dog handlers. **This is the essence of the entire race, and we require that everyone involved in the Yukon Quest be courteous, polite, and helpful towards mushers, officials, veterinarians and fellow volunteers.** This also applies to each volunteer working with the Yukon Quest. Please remember everyone is doing their best. We are all working long hours and it is important to be patient and understanding of everyone's situations.
- **Media:** In every case when you are approached by the media, please direct them to Yukon Quest Officials on site. If not possible, we ask that you tell them you are not in a position to comment on the race.

- **Dog Teams:** No volunteers or visitors are allowed near camping dog teams, nor are they allowed to pet and touch the dogs. *Only mushers, race officials and veterinarians are allowed near the dogs. There are no exceptions!* These dogs are trained athletes and they need their rest at each checkpoint.
- **Working with Dogs:** There are volunteer positions that are specific to those with experience of handling and working with sled dogs. In your application, please outline your experience working with dogs in detail.
- **Expenses:** Volunteers will need to personally cover all of their own expenses during their participation with the race. Until you are here and know your specific volunteer role, please arrange for your own accommodations along with your own food and transportation. Some checkpoints will have floor space available for sleeping. Flexibility and adaptability are essential, as well as preparedness.
- **Report to your manager to get your assigned duties:** The logistics managers, checkpoint managers or members of YQ staff are the people to talk to on site when you are wondering what you should be doing, what shifts need to be covered, where you should be and at what time. These crucial team members will be introduced to you on-site upon your arrival.
- **Volunteer Registration:** You will find a Registration Form at <http://yukonquest.com/support-yq/volunteer-yukon-quest/volunteer-signup>. If you intend on coming, please fill out this form and submit it on the website. If you plan on volunteering in both countries, please specify this on the form and we will make sure both offices get the information. You can also feel free to call or email the offices directly if you have any questions.

Examples of Volunteer Positions

If there is something specific you are interested in or a special skill that you would like to share with us, please let us know!

Food Drop/Straw - (Physical/Outdoors) receive, account for, verify, organize, and lift up to 50 lbs in the cold

Silent Auction - (Office/Physical/Over the Phone) reception/delivery of prizes, identify prizes, print sheets and labels, store, transport, display, manage web entries, etc.

Banquets - (Various) setting up both banquets, this includes setting up the card holders on the tables, merchandise tables, silent auction area, coat checks at the event, tickets sales at the door, and sales during the event (memberships, raffle tickets, merchandise, etc.)

Meet the Mushers - (Various) set up, help during the event, bartending, clean up

QuestFest in Whitehorse - (Various) welcome visitors, answer inquiries, sell merchandise, banquet and raffle tickets, serve food and drinks, run activities, set up, clean up, etc.

Start and Finish Chute Setup - (Physical/Outdoors) work in the snow, setting up banners, crowd control barriers, safety, dog handlers, etc.

Start Line - (Physical/Outdoors) the Start Line Manager will need a large number of volunteers to assist in making the start of the race go smoothly. Tasks include: crowd control, timer, dog handler, runner, etc.

Security - (Outdoors) control the crowds and the public around the start and finish lines

Checkpoint Volunteers - (Various/Outdoors) checkpoint managers need help around the clock with a wide variety of tasks, a few examples include: setting up the checkpoint, checking in/out teams, organizing food drop/straw for mushers, providing wake-up calls to the mushers, road crossings, cooking food, making coffee, cleaning up, etc.

Finish Line Checkers - (Outdoors) day/night outdoor shifts to check in teams

Chute Take-Down - (Physical/Outdoors) clean-up of both start and finish line chutes and any materials left on site

Volunteering in Fairbanks during Start Week

- You need to book your own accommodations at La Quinta Inn and Suites Fairbanks or see tourism website for more information.
- Be ready to do physical work (preparing the chute and start line, etc.) and/or office work (counting tickets, selling merchandise, welcoming visitors, running activities, etc.).
- You may want to rent a car or book a cab or UBER.

Volunteering at Checkpoints during the Race

- The Yukon Quest does not provide transportation for volunteers between checkpoints and you are required to make your own way up the trail.

**Please note: There may be exceptions for checkpoints in Braeburn, Carmacks and Pelly Crossing. Please contact the Yukon office to make arrangements if you want to volunteer in those two communities. Carpooling with other volunteers is highly encouraged.*

- **Accommodations are “rugged” (you will often sleep on a floor surrounded by other people).**
- **Must be prepared to work a minimum of 8-12 hours shift, often at night.**
- Be willing to do anything- serving food, moving straw, checking in/out mushers, organizing/moving food drop bags, cleaning up the dog yard, etc. (capacity to lift 40lbs is preferable).
- A “go with the flow” approach and ability to adapt are best suited for these positions.
- **Important** - If you wish to support us in a checkpoint, a member of our staff will contact you and ask a few more questions to make sure this suits our needs and your expectations. Your contact info will be passed along to our checkpoint managers who will then organize volunteer shifts.

Volunteering in Whitehorse during Finish Week

- You need to book your own accommodations in hotels, B&Bs, and hostels in town (see our tourism websites mentioned above in the Tourist Information section above and don't forget about the Yukon Quest discount at Northern Vision Development Hotels in Whitehorse).
- Must be ready to work late night shifts when mushers are expected to cross the finish line in the middle of the night... a warm greeting back to civilization is always welcome!

“It takes a thousand people to go a thousand miles.”