

Meal Providing

Volunteer Guide



Guide For Meal Providers

Updated October 10, 2023

To Sign Up

Coordinate a date by emailing volunteer@ourhouseshelter.org or calling the Volunteer Manager at (501) 374-7383 ext 184. You can serve one time, or you sign up to serve on a regular schedule. For example, you can serve on the same day of the week each month!

Planning

Your group should decide what you want to serve, but if you want ideas or suggestions, please contact us; we are happy to help! If you can let us know what you're planning, we can add that information to the calendar so other groups can see what's being served and perhaps try to add some variety to the meals. As far as how many we serve, you/your group should be prepared to serve*:

- **Breakfast: 90 people**
- **Lunch: 60 people**
- **Dinner: 90 people**

*These numbers will fluctuate as residents check in and out of the Shelter. The Volunteer Manager will keep you updated about any changes the day before you're scheduled to serve.

Preparation

One or two days before your meal, someone from your group should purchase all the food you'll need for your meal. In general, a meal will cost \$3-\$4 per person. As a guide for what to bring, and to help our clients stay healthy and happy, we ask all meal providers to include the following for lunch and dinner meals:

- Meat
- Vegetable
- Starch
- Drink (usually punch, soda, juice, or tea)
- Dessert

Arriving at Our House

Ensure you plan to arrive early enough to prepare your entire meal and be ready to serve at the appropriate time:

- **Breakfast: 6am on weekdays / 8am on weekends**
- **Lunch: 12pm (noon)**
- **Dinner: 6pm**

When you arrive on campus, you will drive through the gate and first check in at the guard shack. Tell them who you are with and that you are serving/dropping off a meal.

You may then drive to the front door of the Shelter to drop off food. If you are staying to prepare and serve your meal, after you have unloaded you may park in any available spot in the parking lot. Please ask the guard to assist you if you have any trouble finding a place to park.

Signing In

Each member of your meal serving team will need to sign in to help us track how many volunteers are contributing to help us provide meals every month, as well as better communicate with our meal serving groups. The Housing Program Specialist will have a clipboard with the volunteer paperwork for you.

Cooking and Serving at the Shelter

The Our House kitchen has equipment you are welcome to use if you want to cook your meal at the Shelter. Groups who cook their meal at Our House can arrive as early as they like to prepare.

EVERYONE working in the kitchen must wear gloves and hair nets while preparing, cooking, and serving the meal. We provide hair nets and gloves in the kitchen.

Cooking Off Site

Your group may also make the meal off-site and bring it to the Our House campus to serve or be served. If preparing off-site, you may drop the food off at the Our House at your convenience. Let the guard know that you need help unloading and our Shelter team will meet you at the garage door on the side of the Shelter. Please let the Housing Program Specialist know which group you are from and which date and time your meal is for.

Meal Times

Residents will be ready to eat breakfast at 6am on weekdays and 8am on weekends; lunch is served between noon and 1pm; dinner is served from 6 -7pm. After you serve the meal, you are welcome to stay and eat with the residents.

Late Trays

This only affects our dinner servers. Some of our residents work late and will not be able to make it to a meal on time. If you are serving, we ask that you make and set aside trays for these residents first, so they are assured plenty of food to eat when they return. The Housing Program Specialist will be able to give you the number of residents who need late trays each night.

Cleaning

The residents will clean when the meal is over. It gives them the opportunity to positively contribute to their home environment, so there is no need for you to do dishes or stay to clean.

Donation Receipts

If your group would like a donation receipt for your donated food, please ask the Housing Program Specialist, and they will be glad to give you one.

Unable to Serve

If your group can't make it to serve on your scheduled day, please call and let us know so that we can make alternate plans.

- On weekdays, please call the Volunteer Manager at (501) 374-7383 ext 184.
- On weekends (or after 5pm on weekdays), please call the Housing Program Specialist at (501) 374-7383 ext 221.

Inclement Weather

Our House follows LRSD closings when there is inclement weather. We ask that you use your best judgment during this time and don't put yourself in any harm, but please let us know if you won't be coming, so that we can make alternate plans in the kitchen.

- On weekdays, please call the Volunteer Manager at (501) 374-7383 ext 184.
- On weekends (or after 5pm on weekdays), please call the Housing Program Specialist at (501) 374-7383 ext 221 to let them know you won't be able to come and serve.

Tips for New Servers

- We have numerous spices for you to use on the island in the middle of the kitchen.
- There is a small amount of space for your personal items toward the back of the kitchen.
- Rolling carts are available to move the food from your vehicle into the shelter.
- The steam table used for serving needs to have water in the bottom of them while on. The Housing Program Specialist will be happy to help you if you haven't used it before.
- If you use ice, please leave 2 inches in the bottom of the machine or it will stop making ice.

If you have any questions about where things are in the kitchen, please ask the Housing Program Specialist! Thank you so much for your generous service to Our House! If you have any questions or need any help at all, we are here for you!

Clayton Curole

Volunteer Manager

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