

Guidelines for Preparing and Serving Dinner at Van Buren Center

Community Shelter Board opened a new center with multiple shelter programs – Van Buren Center – to address the growing numbers of men, women and families experiencing homelessness.

We rely on volunteers to either underwrite the food costs of the evening meal or prepare the food themselves. The shelter can accommodate up to 356 single adults and more than 64 families each night. Food costs continue to rise. We could save more than \$180,000 a year, if we had sponsors for the evening meal each night. That money can be used to help people find housing more quickly and end their homelessness.

We need you!

VAN BUREN MEAL HOSTS AGREE TO

1. Provide and prepare the meal (physically or financially).
2. Prepare dining room area.
3. Serve food.
4. Clean up (wash dishes, sanitize counters, put things back where they belong).

Food can be provided using the following methods:

1. Your group brings the necessary ingredients and prepares the meal in our kitchen. Your group brings food enough to feed 140 women or 64 families (about 220 meals), or both.
2. In-house kitchen option where our kitchen staff will provide and prepare the meal for your group since you are sponsoring the meal at \$500. Your group then serves and cleans up.

Dinner is served at 6:00 pm, so arrive by 4:00 pm to use our kitchen. If you plan on arriving at a different time, please let us know ahead of time when you will arrive.

The ideal group size is between 6 and 12 people. Please let us know if your group will be either smaller or larger than this range.

TO SCHEDULE A MEAL HOST DATE

Go to www.csb.volunteerhub.com, create an account if you don't already have one, and then scroll through the calendar to find a date that works for your group's schedule. Sign-up and then let Cary Simonton, our Volunteer Coordinator, know how many are in your group and what your menu will be. You can reach Cary at csimonton@csb.org or 614-715-2030 x211.

SUGGESTED MENUS:

Dietary considerations:

We ask that you do not prepare a pork product for dietary or religious purposes or use nuts or nut products (including peanut butter and peanut oil) due to the potential for severe food allergies.

Please choose from one of these menus. Contact Cary Simonton, if you'd like to mix and match items below or cook something different.

1. Chicken Patty Sandwich	Corn
	Pineapple tidbits
2. Meatloaf	Mashed potatoes/gravy
	Corn
3. Cheeseburgers	French fries
	Canned peaches
4. Chili (mild)	Cornbread
	Mixed fruit
5. Lasagna	Tossed salad
	Garlic bread
6. Barbeque chicken	Scalloped potatoes
	Dinner rolls
7. Chicken nuggets	Tater tots
	Fresh vegetable and dip
8. Chicken & dumplings	Peas
	Sliced bread
9. Turkey	Mashed potatoes/gravy
	Green beans
10. Pot roast	Mixed vegetables
	Dinner rolls

11. Spaghetti/meatballs	
	Tossed salad
	Apples
	Dinner rolls
12. Baked chicken	
	Green beans
	Macaroni & cheese
13. Hot dogs	
	French fries
	Canned fruit
14. Tacos	

Menus need to be confirmed with the Volunteer Coordinator no less than 7 days before the reserved date.

THINGS TO KNOW THE DAY YOU SERVE

Groups will need to arrive no later than 4 pm in order to have dinner ready by 6 pm.

Upon arrival

1. Enter the main entrance, which is flanked by a mural. Go through security and give them your Liability Waiver, if you've not previously completed one.
2. Head to the kitchen with your food.
3. Meet the kitchen staff who will be working with you hand-in-hand to prepare dinner. They'll be able to guide and give direction as needed, including finding utensils, cookware, operating the stove, etc.
4. Put on an apron, a hair net, and gloves. Please remember to pull back hair that is shoulder length or longer.
5. Please remember that open-toed shoes, flip flops, and sandals are not permitted to be worn in the kitchen.
6. To protect the health of our families, we ask that volunteers who are sick or are caring for a sick family member (cold, flu, intestinal issues, etc.) refrain from assisting with meal preparation or serving the meal.

Once you are suited up and ready, please assist with the following:

1. Begin cooking/warming food (please work with kitchen staff to ensure that food is cooked and warmed to proper temperature)
2. Wipe down all tables in the dining area, if needed.
3. Prepare dining room per kitchen staff instructions

Serving the meal

1. When it is time to serve dinner, there will need to be 2-3 people plating the food and handing it to the guests.

2. On the single side dining room, there will need to be someone serving glasses of water and someone to do dishes.
3. On the family side dining room, someone will pass out milk to the children and pregnant women, someone will be at the water table and several people will take plates to children under 8 years of age sitting at tables. Others will be needed to clean up spills and be available to help as needed.

After dinner

1. Clean the tables and floors in the dining room.
2. In the kitchen, clean all the appliances, pots and pans and countertops.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can the families get “seconds”?

Depending on the amount of food available, second helpings may be offered 45 minutes after dinner started. Please work with the kitchen staff to determine the availability and process for serving seconds.

2. Can volunteers eat the meal they are serving?

Once everyone has been served, if there's enough food, you are welcome to sit and eat with the guests.

3. Is there anything else we can do?

- On the family side, offer to hold a baby, ask a parent if they would like baby food for their child or help a parent get food and drink for their children, etc.
- Music is always welcomed. Consider asking some volunteers to form a small group for singing or performance during meal times.
- To respect the confidentiality of our residents, we ask that you do not take photos of our families. If you have any questions regarding photos, please speak to the staff. Please feel free to take photos of your group while preparing the meal in our kitchen.

4. Can our group receive a tour?

Please let Cary Simonton (csimonton@csb.org) know ahead of time if your group is interested in receiving a tour. Tours usually run from 5 – 5:30 pm, depending on when your group arrives to prepare and cook the food. Any other questions, contact Cary Simonton at csimonton@csb.org or 614-715-2030 x211.



To address an unprecedented demand for shelter among single adults and families in Columbus and Franklin County, and thanks to the outstanding investment of generous funders from our community, Community Shelter Board concluded the renovation of Van Buren Center in 2015. Van Buren Center serves up to 64 families and up to 356 women and men nightly, providing a safe and secure place for families and single adults to stay while they receive help to quickly move from shelter into stable housing. Van Buren Center has

allowed us to right-size the crisis response system for both single adults and families, with the ultimate intention that everyone who needs shelter and services is able to get it immediately.

The annual cost to operate Van Buren Center, including meal costs, and to deliver new, intensive services focused on getting people into housing more quickly across our entire shelter network is \$8.1M. This allows us to shelter 650 families, 1,500 single women and 1,600 single men every year, along with essential services to end their homelessness. Community Shelter Board funds a majority of the costs; therefore, private investments are extremely important to continue impacting thousands of lives.

The YMCA of Central Ohio is our funded partner to operate programming and services at Van Buren Center. They deliver rapid re-housing programs for single adults at Van Buren Center and at all other shelters serving single men and women. They work with people throughout their stay in the shelter system, providing individualized housing stabilization plans and post-shelter services in housing. Case managers link people to community supports and services to ensure housing stability, like mental health, substance abuse, physical healthcare, employment and job training, and housing resources. Case managers continue to work with people after they are housed in order to provide the supports needed to maintain stable housing.



A FEW THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE AT VAN BUREN CENTER EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- Every guest at the Van Buren Center is experiencing a housing crisis; some guests have better coping skills than others and some have more serious barriers than others
- Homelessness is a moment in someone's life—it is an experience, we try not to apply it as a label
- There is a common belief that most people who experience homelessness suffer from drug abuse and mental illness—this is certainly a barrier for many of our guests but national studies have shown that the majority of people who experience homelessness are non-disabled
- One of the biggest factors that could help reduce the experience of homelessness is more affordable housing
- The most important thing to remember while volunteering at the Van Buren Center is to treat every guest as you would treat your own neighbor—you will find that our guests have great senses of humor, enjoy talking, are appreciative of your support and may get frustrated or unhappy about something, just as you or I might
- If you have a difficult interaction with a guest, continue to respect their personal space and refrain from engaging in any challenging questions
- If the concerns or questions continue, please be sure to ask for assistance from someone in the kitchen or ask to speak with a supervisor on duty
- If you have the opportunity, please sit down and have a meal with one of our guests...thanks for volunteering!