



## Volunteer Handbook

### Our Program

The mission of Loaves & Fishes is to provide nutritious meals to those facing hunger in Minnesota in an atmosphere of hospitality at site locations where the need is greatest. Over 6,500 volunteers serve at dining sites in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Bloomington, Richfield, Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, Shakopee, Coon Rapids, Brooklyn Center, Hopkins, Crystal and Marshall, and with their help we serve over 1,900 meals every night. Loaves & Fishes also operates one year-round lunch site and multiple additional lunch sites during the summer as a part of the USDA Summer Food Service Program.

### Our Guests

We serve anyone who comes to us in need of a meal. Loaves & Fishes is a no-questions-asked program, meaning that those who come to our dining sites are not asked to provide any information in order to eat with us. We serve families that come in together as well as both adults and children who come in on their own. Some of our guests are homeless, others utilize shelters, and some stay with friends or family while they are in housing transition. Many of our guests rent or own their own place and dine with us because they still struggle to pay for food. Some come simply because they are lonely and Loaves & Fishes offers them an opportunity to share a meal with another person.

### Our Volunteers

Loaves & Fishes works with both individual volunteers as well as groups! Volunteers work together at our dining sites, along with Loaves & Fishes staff, to share a meal with our guests. Loaves & Fishes volunteers include students, families, faith based groups, local businesses, corporations, civic groups, and community groups.

Volunteers can serve in one or all of the following ways:

- **Meal planning:** Volunteers have the option to plan a healthy meal and source all of the food for the meal prior to the serving night.
- **Meal preparation:** Volunteers work at the dining sites with Loaves & Fishes Site Coordinators to prepare meals. No special cooking skills are required!
- **Meal serving & Clean up:** Volunteers work together to serve the meal, either serving guests as they come through a line or by serving trays of food to guests at tables. Volunteers help throughout the meal as well as after the meal to assist with kitchen and dining area clean up.

- **Guest Hospitality:** Some individuals serve as hospitality volunteers by visiting with guests, sharing a meal and conversation.

## How to Volunteer

*Volunteers work at Loaves & Fishes dining sites in the kitchen and/or dining room area/s. We require volunteers wear close-toed shoes and recommend volunteers wear washable, comfortable clothing and avoid wearing or bringing personal items of great value. Hair restraints, aprons and gloves, required for food handling and any work done in the kitchen, are provided for you at the site. If preferred, volunteers may bring their own hat and apron. All kitchen equipment is provided, including wares and utensils for cooking, serving, and dining.*

## As an Individual or Sporadic Volunteer Team

Individuals are invited to work with our dining sites to help out in any of the ways described on the previous page. Individuals completing service learning hours or community service are welcomed. Individuals are can sign up to volunteer through our website: { HYPERLINK "<http://www.loavesandfishesmn.org/volunteer.html>" }.

## As a Recurring Team

Volunteer teams are usually made up of 8-15 members. Teams can choose to volunteer for a one-time opportunity or on a regular, ongoing basis. Teams have the option of sourcing and purchasing all food for their meal or providing a donation to the program. Our estimated cost per plate is \$2.50, a donation of any amount to help cover a portion of the cost is welcomed. Teams that wish to volunteer on an ongoing basis are asked to connect with our Director of Volunteers to schedule a recurring opportunity. If you wish to volunteer one time, simply sign up online. If you wish to volunteer, on a recurring basis, please contact Loaves & Fishes Director of Volunteers. Contact information is at the end of this document.

### **Responsibilities within the team are often broken down as such:**

- **Team Leader:** This individual ensures that a healthy meal, meeting Loaves & Fishes adult nutrition standards, is planned, that food for the meal is ordered, and that all meal-related duties are assigned. The Team Leader also maintains a list of volunteer contact information and reports team member changes to the Site Coordinator. This individual serves as the primary contact for Loaves & Fishes, communicating with the Loaves & Fishes Volunteer Coordinator and Site Coordinator as needed.
- **Food Preparation Volunteers:** 2 - 5 team members arrive at the dining site between 2:00 – 3:00pm to prepare the meal. These individuals bring all food needed for the meal and work with the Site Coordinator to learn use of kitchen tools and equipment and handle all cooking and preparation.

- **Food Serving & Clean up Volunteers:** Remaining team members arrive 30 minutes before the meal serving time. Their Roles are to either join the food preparation volunteers to serve together or relieve them for the evening. Some dining sites assemble trays of food that are served to seated guests, while others welcome guests to pass through a serving line. Beverages, including milk, water and coffee, are served to guests at a separate beverage table. Children are served milk from the food serving line to ensure USDA guidelines are met.

Team members who serve the meal also perform clean up. Some groups utilize additional volunteers to help with serving and clean-up at the end of the meal, for various reasons. Clean-up includes washing dishes, utensils, and trays, cleaning the kitchen and dining area, mopping, and any additional duties assigned by the Site Coordinator.

- **Support Volunteers:** Some volunteers assist with duties as assigned by the on-site Loaves & Fishes Site Coordinator. This position is variable depending on the evening. Tasks range from serving the meal to washing dishes to monitoring the dining room. Volunteers will assist with post-meal clean up.
- **Hospitality Volunteers:** Some volunteers visit with guests while the meal is being served. These individuals might sit with a guest to share a cup of coffee or a tray of food. Most guests appreciate the company and welcome the extension of kindness and conversation.

## Planning your Meal (For Sporadic & Recurring Volunteer Teams)

If volunteers would like, there is the opportunity to plan the meal that they serve with Loaves & Fishes. Often volunteer teams decide what meal they will serve, purchase all food needed, and ensure that the food is on-site and ready to be used when the time comes for meal preparation. Meal suggestions can be found in the Loaves & Fishes Healthy Menu Guide. Often, One-Time Volunteer teams source food from Loaves & Fishes and have our trained Site Coordinators plan the meal. This works great for teams who prefer to provide donation.

### Focus on Health

Meals served through Loaves & Fishes meet USDA adult nutrition standards, found in our Healthy Menu Guide. When planning your menu, please keep in mind that each plate should include:

- 2 Fruit/Vegetable – 1 cup total
- 1 Grain – 2 slices bread or 1 cup pasta, etc.
- 1 Meat/Meat Alternate – 2oz meat, fish, poultry or cheese or 1oz nuts, etc.
- 8 oz. Milk

Please discuss your menu with the Site Coordinator ahead of time to make sure that it meets the USDA nutritional guidelines.

### How Much to Plan For

The number of guests served varies by dining site and time of month, with guest numbers increasing at the end of the month. Work with the coordinator of the site where you are volunteering to determine how many guests to expect and how much food you will need.

### **Food Purchasing Options**

Grocery Store or Warehouse Club - Rainbow, Cub, Sam's Club, Costco, etc.

- Team is responsible for all planning, purchasing, and delivery

### Sourcing Food from Loaves & Fishes

- Team lead of the volunteer group works directly with Loaves & Fishes Director of Operations, contact information below, to discuss sourcing food from our warehouse. This does require some flexibility with the menu. Loaves & Fishes is often able to purchase food at reduced cost.

### Saint's Commercial Food Service (Twin Cities Volunteers Only)

- To access a list of available foods, visit: { HYPERLINK "http://www.saintsfood.com/" }  
Follow pathway: Commercial Food Service/ Church Programs/ Loaves & Fishes / Menu Booklet / Username: online2 , Password: booklet2
- Delivers food directly to the dining site (free delivery on orders over \$100)
- Food orders can be placed at least 48 hours in advance of need via:
  - Phone: 612-870-9661, Fax: 612-870-1494, Email: { HYPERLINK "mailto:info@saintsfood.com" }
  - Online: { HYPERLINK "http://www.saintsfood.com/" } / Commercial Food Service/ Online Ordering/ Username: saintsfood , Password: online

Note: As of March 2015, Second Harvest Heartland will only accept orders fulfilling or exceeding 500 lbs.

Director of Operations  
Loaves & Fishes  
612-326-3668  
{ HYPERLINK "mailto:directorofops@loavesandfishesmn.org" }

## **Policies and Procedures**

*We aim to keep our volunteers safe and maintain an environment that encourages both volunteers and guests to return! For this reason, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines enforced by Loaves & Fishes.*

**Food Safety:** Loaves & Fishes adheres to OSHA safety standards for commercial kitchens. We ask that all volunteers keep the following rules in mind while serving with us:

- **Hand Washing & Gloves:** All volunteers and staff must thoroughly wash and dry their hands

before work, between tasks, and before working with food goods and equipment. Gloves are to be worn at all times and changed between tasks and often. Any cut or sores on hands must be covered by a bandage and gloves.

- **Hair Restraints:** Hair restraints are required and available for use when preparing and serving food. You are welcome to bring your own hats, otherwise, hairnets or hats are provided at each site and must be worn at all times.
- **Food Temperatures:** A cooking thermometer must be used to assure that safe temperatures have been reached when cooking meats, 160—180 degrees depending upon the meat. If preparing food items off site, they must be transported safely in containers that maintain safe temperatures. Off-site cooking must be done in an approved commercial kitchen; no exceptions. *Please refer to the “7 Food Safety Steps for Successful Community Meals” for additional guidelines.*

**Youth Participation:** At Loaves & Fishes we are respectful of the desire of parents and youth sponsors to involve youth in community service and to expose them to a condition of life different from their own. These youth participation guidelines help minimize our liability risk, provide for the safety of the youth, provide an efficient work environment, and help maintain the dignity of our guests.

- Youth 16 years of age and older can help in all areas of the dining sites.
- Volunteers aged 15 and younger are not permitted to be in the kitchen in the proximity of hot food, ovens, dishwashers, or other potentially hazardous kitchen equipment. These volunteers are also not permitted to handle hot beverages and food on the serving line.
- Youth age 13 to 15 must have 1 adult to every five youth for supervision purposes.
- Youth age 12 and under need to have direct one-on-one supervision. It is suggested that children under the age of 8 do not attend.
- Because each dining site is different and has individual needs, the Site Coordinator may also implement additional youth serving restrictions as they deem appropriate.

Please note that if children do accompany the serving team, adult supervision is necessary as outlined above and, if not planned appropriately, this may leave the serving team short-handed. Please be sure to make any necessary adjustments in volunteer numbers when your group includes youth volunteers.

**Background Checks:** Background checks are not mandatory for participation in the program, however, Loaves & Fishes reserves the right to perform MN state background checks on all volunteers.

**Court Ordered Community Service:** Individuals needing to complete court ordered community service are welcomed to do so through the Loaves & Fishes program pending the nature of the offense. Potential volunteers must provide written documentation from the courts, probation officer/s, or their lawyer stating that they are required to complete court ordered community service hours, as well as the specifics of the offense.

Loaves & Fishes reserves the right to deny any individual in need of court ordered community

service the ability to obtain their service hours through the program. Certain offenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Individuals charged with/pleading guilty to/having been found guilty of offenses including but not limited to the following will not be permitted to complete court ordered community service with the program:

- Armed Robbery
- Assault
- Aggravated Assault
- Battery
- Kidnapping
- Arson
- Robbery
- Statutory Offense
  - Sexual Abuse
  - Sexual Assault
  - Rape

**Service Hour Verification:** We happily invite individuals wishing to complete service hours to volunteer with the program! This might include hours required for corporate volunteerism, National Honors Society, a service learning component of a university course, etc. Please notify the Site Coordinator of the location/s where you volunteer if you will need them to verify the hours that you work with us as they will confirm your hours as you complete them. Loaves & Fishes staff will only confirm volunteer hours that have already been completed, not hours that will be completed in the future. You may use your own materials to track volunteer hours or the Service Hour Verification form provided by Loaves & Fishes.

**Confidentiality:** We value our volunteers and guests and keep their information private.

- **Volunteer Information & Confidentiality:** Volunteer information is kept confidential and will not be sold, traded, or exchanged with any agency not affiliated with Loaves & Fishes.
- **Guest Information & Confidentiality:** No personal information is collected from guests. Every individual served by Loaves & Fishes has the right to expect all information regarding him/herself and his/her family will be handled in a confidential manner. Please do not share with others the names of guests you see at our dining sites.

**Guidelines for Donations:** We greatly appreciate your donation of money and/or supplies! Serving supplies and items for guests can be brought directly to the sites. Monetary donations cannot be accepted at our sites, rather directed to:

*Loaves & Fishes— Central Office  
721 Kasota Ave SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414*

## Volunteer Feedback and Concerns

*Loaves & Fishes welcomes your feedback and suggestions from your experience as a volunteer! To express feedback and suggestions, including complaints, or to report an incident you may:*

1. Communicate your feedback, suggestion, complaint, or incident to the Site Coordinator. Incidents and/or complaints will either be handled immediately or addressed and attempted to be resolved within ten working days.
2. If incidents recur, complaints are not satisfactorily resolved, or you would like to share feedback or suggestions with additional Loaves & Fishes staff, you may also contact the Loaves & Fishes Director of Volunteers:

Director of Volunteers

Loaves & Fishes MN

612-326-3673

[volunteer@loavesandfishesmn.org](mailto:volunteer@loavesandfishesmn.org)