

GUEST CHEF PROGRAM OVERVIEW



ABOUT ASCENCIA

Ascencia mobilizes staff, volunteers, and community partners to lift people out of homelessness one person, one family at a time. We serve over 1,200 homeless men, women, and children each year through our comprehensive programs, which include street outreach, an Access Center with case management, therapy, and other comprehensive services, as well as our 45-bed emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing programs.

Ascencia's 45-bed year-round emergency shelter provides critically needed respite for families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Free to clients, the shelter offers laundry and shower facilities, a safe place to sleep, and nutritious meals prepared by volunteer Guest Chefs. The emergency shelter serves as a temporary home for over 200 people annually.

WHAT IS THE GUEST CHEF PROGRAM?

Volunteers in our Guest Chef Program commit to preparing meals for approximately 45 shelter residents. Homeless families and adults face severely limited options for affordable, nutritious meals. We are so appreciative of our Guest Chefs for providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day of the year.

Volunteers typically create a Guest Chef team comprised of fellow members of a congregation, service organization, co-workers, family members, friends, etc. The Guest Chefs will plan the menu, purchase and prepare the ingredients, then cook and serve the meal to our shelter residents. We do not require a recurring commitment from our Guest Chef teams. Guest Chefs may volunteer for multiple meals per month or one meal occasionally. However, we notice that some level of consistency helps the Guest Chef teams mobilize their volunteers more effectively.

As we re-open our facilities to volunteers, our Guest Chefs will be able to cook **breakfast and dinner** meals in Ascencia's kitchen. Lunch will continue to be drop-off only. For those who do not yet feel ready to cook in person, we continue to offer the option to drop off food at our Access Center.

IN PERSON GUEST CHEF SERVICE PROTOCOLS

Guest Chefs who wish to cook in person must maintain a sanitary kitchen environment and comply with CDC social distancing guidelines and health regulations in the handling of food, including washing of hands and wearing gloves before preparing and serving food. Guest chefs must also adhere to Ascencia's COVID-19 safety protocols.

If changing your service to on-site, please notify Ascencia staff. The following protocols must be followed:

- Masks must be worn properly at all times (regardless of vaccination status)
- Maximum 5 volunteers and 2 hours per service
- Hands must be washed prior to handling food and gloves must be worn when handling or serving food and drinks
- Must complete a temperature check and sign a liability waiver upon entry
- Guest Chefs must clean up after themselves, including washing all dishes and sanitizing surfaces. Because we do not have staff to manage clean up, this policy is not flexible and **Ascencia reserves the right to terminate on-site service if not adhered to**. Thank you for understanding
- At this time, Guest Chefs are not permitted in the dining area and must remain in the kitchen while clients are eating.

DROP-OFF INSTRUCTIONS

For Guest Chefs who wish to prepare food at home, please ensure that all meals are cooked and prepared ahead of time as our staff is not able to cook the meals. Our Resident Associates are only able to do light reheating in the oven for no longer than 30 minutes.

When you arrive to drop off meals, please park on the street or in Ascencia' reserved parking. Our staff will come out to your vehicle to retrieve the food and other items. Please give the RA a call upon arrival at 818-246-7900 x104 or simply ring the side doorbell.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT ASCENCIA WITHOUT LEAVING MY HOME?

Click [here](#) to browse local restaurants that will deliver catering!

HOW MANY FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH OR DINNER?

In general, please anticipate **45 clients** for the emergency shelter. The number of shelter clients we have is constantly changing as we welcome new clients while other clients become permanently housed. We cannot provide an accurate number and therefore ask our Guest Chef Volunteers to prepare enough meals to feed our shelter as if it were full.

WHERE IS ASCENCIA LOCATED

Ascencia's 45-bed emergency shelter is located at 1851 Tyburn Street, Glendale, CA 91204.

PARKING

Street parking is available. You may park in the reserved parking to unload your vehicle. The parking lot across from our building is private parking and not for our use.

WHEN SHOULD I ARRIVE AT ASCENCIA?

We kindly request meals to be served promptly at 6:00 AM for breakfast, 11:00 AM for lunch and 6:00 PM for dinner. Depending on the anticipated preparation and/or plating time necessary, most of our Guest Chefs arrive at the shelter well in advance of those hours; for meal preparation, typically Guest Chefs arrive at 5 AM for breakfast and 5 PM for dinner. For Guest Chefs who are dropping off meals, please arrive at 5:30 AM for breakfast, 10:30 AM for lunch, and 5:30 PM for dinner to allow our Resident Associates time to reheat food.

Please arrive no later than 5:45 AM for breakfast OR 5:45 PM for dinner. If your team does not arrive by 6:15 AM for breakfast, 11:15 AM for lunch, or 6:15 PM for dinner, the Resident Associate will order pizza for dinner or pull out the cereal for breakfast. **If you are running late, please notify the Resident Associate Desk by calling 818-246-7900 x104.**

WHAT IS A TYPICAL GUEST CHEF BREAKFAST?

Breakfast may be any morning-friendly food: cereal, oatmeal, eggs, toast, pancakes, waffles, bacon, sausage, quiches, etc. Please plan to include beverages with breakfast. For beverage options we recommend water, milk or juice. Please note a commercial size coffeemaker is available at the shelter and we generally have a supply of ground coffee in stock.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL GUEST CHEF LUNCH?

Lunch will continue to operate as drop-off only and follows the same menu guidelines as dinner, with the option to provide Brown Bag Lunches. Brown bag lunches can include sandwiches, fruit, chips, water, etc. You can make just about any sandwich you would like; our most popular is peanut butter and jelly sandwiches but we accept meat sandwiches as well. For sandwiches other than PBJs, please include a source of protein (such as lean meats like turkey, salami, or ham) and/or healthy vegetables. Please include vegan/vegetarian options. We ask that all lunches include a fruit (like an apple) and water or a healthy drink.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL GUEST CHEF DINNER?

In preparing the dinner menu, we kindly request that Guest Chefs observe the following guidelines in order to best meet the needs of our most health-challenged shelter residents:

- **MEALS:** please provide hot meals and consider lower sodium meals.
 - Main dishes of hearty soups, stews, pasta, chili, meatloaf, and chicken are greatly appreciated.
 - Dishes should include a source of protein and/or healthy vegetables.
 - Guest Chefs have also enjoyed including side dishes of salad or other vegetables, dinner rolls, potatoes or rice.
 - Though not necessary, some Guest Chefs enjoy serving dessert with dinner, and our shelter residents really appreciate the treat. In the interest of moderation however, we kindly request that Guest Chefs consider incorporating healthier dessert selections such as fresh fruit, jello, frozen yogurt or other treat alternatives to baked goods.
 - Please include vegetarian options.
- **BEVERAGES:** please plan to include beverages with your meal. For beverage options, we recommend water, decaffeinated iced tea, milk or natural fruit juices. We do not recommend soda but understand that options may be limited from time to time.

PLEASE BRING NAPKINS, PLATES, UTENSILS, CUPS AND COOKWARE

We kindly request that our Guest Chefs bring these items with you: paper napkins, paper plates/bowls, paper or plastic cups, plastic utensils, serving utensils, dishes and platters. For the 45-bed emergency shelter, please also bring any cookware such as large pots and pans that you may need in order to prepare your meals.

After meal service, Guest Chefs typically donate any unused paper or plastic products to Ascencia. If you would like to know if we currently have enough of these items for your meal service, please feel free to ask us!

BUFFET STYLE OR PLATED

When the meal is ready to be served, please inform the Resident Associate on duty who will then call everyone to breakfast or dinner. Please feel free to serve the meal buffet-style or plated. Residents will take their meals in the communal dining hall.

WHERE IS EVERYONE

Please don't be discouraged if the clients you see in the shelter don't match the headcount you were given. This can happen with dinner service in particular as some residents may need to return to the shelter after dinner service has ended. This is usually a result of work schedules or other extenuating circumstances. For these residents, leftovers are greatly appreciated! Please be prepared to plate and cover (with plastic or foil wrap) any leftover food. These individual plates will be placed in the refrigerator and ready for each client upon his/her return to the shelter and for lunch the next afternoon.

ARE SECOND HELPINGS PERMITTED

Please keep in mind that at most dinners, some clients will be returning to the shelter after meal service has ended. After clients in the shelter have been served their first helping, please ask the Resident Associate on duty how many plates to set aside for those clients returning later to the shelter. Please do this before allowing second helpings to be served. Thank you!

PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR SHELTER NEAT AND TIDY

Guest Chefs must also clean up the kitchen afterwards. All dishes must be washed and all counters, stovetops, and surfaces must be sanitized before leaving the shelter.

WHAT IF I NEED VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR A SCHOOL PROGRAM?

We are happy to sign off any volunteer hours and/or provide an acknowledgement letter noting your hours served. Please note that we allot two hours per volunteer shift, whether meals are prepared at home or on-site. If provided with a detailed proposal, we can discuss opportunities to sign off on more than two hours per shift.

PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

The opportunity to interact with our shelter residents provides a relaxed atmosphere where friendly conversation flows easily. However, to protect our volunteers' privacy, we request that Guest Chefs refrain from sharing personal information with the shelter residents.

Please do not share your email address, phone number, home address, etc. If you choose to do so, please be prepared to have the shelter resident(s) follow up and contact you. Also, please do not give shelter residents money or any other items. Should you be asked for such help, please feel free to let them know it is against Ascencia policy and to refer them to Ascencia staff. In addition, please let the Resident Associate on duty know when it is convenient or comfortable for you to do so. Alternatively, please email volunteer@AscenciaCA.org or call Ascencia at (818) 246-7900 Monday through Friday.

Finally, to protect the confidentiality of our clients, please do not take photographs, videos, or share with anyone the identity of any shelter resident you meet or recognize. Should you have youth serving on your Guest Chef team, please do share this very important policy with them. Every now and then a volunteer child or teen will recognize a schoolmate staying at the shelter; at all times volunteer youth should understand that it is inappropriate to share this information with others.

WHAT IF I HAVE TO CANCEL?

Please keep us informed! We thank you for your commitment to serve and understand that despite best intentions, last minute emergencies arise. Should you need to cancel your service day, please let us know immediately so that we can do our best to find a replacement Guest Chef Team. The more advance notice we have, the more likely that we can arrange for another Guest Chef to fill in. For the protection of our shelter residents, staff and other volunteers, we thank you in advance for staying home if you become sick.

To cancel, please email Kmoreno@Ascenciaca.org or call Ascencia at (818) 246-7900x. 113 Monday through Friday from 8 AM - 5 PM. After 5 PM and on weekends, please call the Resident Associate on duty at (818) 246-7900 x. 104.

QUESTIONS?

For questions or concerns, please email Kmoreno@AscenciaCA.org or call Ascencia at (818) 246-7900 x. 113 Monday through Friday from 8AM – 5PM.