

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 and other 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.

COVID-19 GUEST CHEF POLICIES

In order to keep our clients safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, our shelter is no longer open to Guest Chef Volunteers. Instead, we ask that our Guest Chefs *purchase or prepare meals in advance and drop off food at our Access Center*. 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's 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.

We look forward to inviting our Guest Chef volunteers back into our facility to cook meals in person once it is safe to do so!

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.

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. To allow our Resident Associates time to reheat food, we prefer our Guest Chefs to arrive at 5:30 AM for breakfast, 10:30 AM for lunch, and 5:30 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 follows the same 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. If you decide to make a meat sandwich 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.
 - 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.
- **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!

HOW CAN I SUPPORT ASCENCIA WITHOUT LEAVING MY HOME?

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

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 Gpineda@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 Gpineda@AscenciaCA.org or call Ascencia at (818) 246-7900 x. 113