

Volunteer Handbook
Blake Field Drop-In Center
New Haven, CT
Updated: 5/28/2020

Hi there!

Thank you so much for your interest in volunteering at the City of New Haven's **Blake Field Drop-In Center**. As you likely know, the COVID-19 Pandemic has been particularly challenging for people experiencing homelessness in New Haven. It means so much to us that you are volunteering your time to help us provide needed resources to our community.

Our drop-in center will likely be quite busy, so we ask that you read this handbook and email us with any questions you have at blakefieldvolunteerteam@gmail.com prior to your volunteer shift. Of course, if you have questions while you are volunteering, please do not hesitate to ask onsite staff!

If you sign up for a volunteer shift, please be absolutely sure that you can attend. When we have fewer volunteers than expected, our guests miss out on the services they deserve. **It is our expectation that volunteers will not cancel within 48 hours of the shift they have signed up for. That said, if you feel at all unwell, please DO NOT volunteer, and contact us to let us know.**

Thank you again for your time and support of the most vulnerable in our community during this incredibly challenging moment, we appreciate you!

The Blake Field Drop-In Center Volunteer Team
blakefieldvolunteerteam@gmail.com

General Information

The drop-in center, located at Blake Field in East Rock, will function as a triage site to identify and provide resources to people experiencing homelessness while connecting them to medical and behavioral health services, as well as providing basic services like food, showers, and clothing. The drop-in center is opening on Tuesday May 5th, and will be open Monday through Friday, 12:30-4:30 PM.

The drop-in center is located at:

Blake Field
Willow St. & Mitchell Dr.
New Haven, CT 06511

Health/Safety Information

All guests, staff, and volunteers will be required to practice **social distancing**. Because this role will entail direct contact with a high risk population, **volunteers should bring masks and gloves, and will be provided with supplies as needed.**

Prior to volunteering, please review this list of symptoms and monitor whether you have any of them. If you have any of these symptoms or are feeling at all unwell, please **DO NOT** volunteer, and contact us at blakefieldvolunteerteam@gmail.com to let us know.

- **Either** of the following two symptoms
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- **Or** at least two of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell

To minimize risk of infection, if there are more volunteers than are needed, some volunteers may be asked to leave. To limit the risk to volunteers, **all volunteers must be under the age of 60**. Additionally, if you have any [underlying conditions](#) that put you at an elevated risk of COVID-19, please do not volunteer.

Consistent with Governor Lamont's Executive Order, please wear a mask on your way to and from the Drop-In Center. You are encouraged to wear your own mask while volunteering, but we can provide you with one as well if you would like.

Try not to bring any belongings that aren't totally necessary and don't fit in your pockets. Once you're home, be aware of what you touch and make sure to wash your hands and disinfect your keys and phone (and anything else you've touched like doorknobs), much like you're getting home from the grocery store. Additionally, you should immediately put your clothes in the hamper and shower after your shift.

While you are volunteering, we ask that you refrain from sharing your personal contact information with guests at the drop-in center. If a guest would like to follow up with you, please direct them to Sam Greenberg, the Drop-In Center Coordinator.

Volunteer Roles

Check-In/Greeter (Mon-Fri, 12:00-2:00pm, 2:00-4:00pm)

- Volunteers will greet guests as they arrive at the drop-in center. They will verbally screen guests for symptoms, check guests in, provide them with masks, and direct them to the services they need.

Food Support (Mon-Fri, 1:00-3:00pm)

- Volunteers will help unload food delivery, distribute lunch to guests, and clean up food station after lunch is served.

Shower Support (Tue/Thur, 1:00-3:30pm)

- Volunteers will oversee and support guests in accessing showers in locker rooms at East Rock Community Magnet School. Guests will use showers in men's and women's locker rooms one at a time.

Contact Information

- For any questions, comments, or concerns about volunteering, please reach out to blakefieldvolunteerteam@gmail.com.
- If you are running late for your volunteer shift or have any urgent questions on the day of your shift, please text or call Sam Greenberg, Drop-In Center Coordinator, at **(617) 462-1848**.

FAQs

- *Is the drop-in center heated and air-conditioned?*
 - The center is covered and will have lighting, but is not temperature-controlled. Please dress for the weather.
- *Can I bring my own mask?*
 - Yes!
- *Will guests with COVID-19 symptoms be able to enter the drop-in center?*
 - All guests will be screened for symptoms prior to entry. Any guest with symptoms will be directed to wait outside the tent and will be immediately connected to our medical partners for advice and care.
- *Will the drop-in center interfere with food distribution at East Rock Magnet School?*
 - No. The drop-in center opens after the school's food distribution service ends. Additionally, drop-in center guests will have access to showers on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while food distribution is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
- *Will there be security on site?*

- Officers from the New Haven Police Department will be stationed nearby, but will only enter the drop-in center if necessary .
- *Is there parking at the drop-in center?*
 - Yes! There is plenty of parking, you can enter the lot right by the Willow St. and Mitchell Dr. intersection.
- *Where can I see and manage my volunteer shifts?*
 - You can see and manage shifts at bit.ly/blakefieldvolunteer and please email blakefieldvolunteerteam@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.
- *Can I donate items to the Drop-In Center?*
 - Yes! We have set up an Amazon wish list for donations. You can see the list and donate at bit.ly/blakefieldwishlist
- *What can I tell others who are interested in volunteering?*
 - Please consider volunteering at the City of New Haven's Blake Field Drop-In Center to support people experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The drop-in center, located at Blake Field (next to East Rock Magnet School), will provide food, showers, clothing, medical and mental health services, and triage/case management. Learn more and sign up at: <http://bit.ly/blakefieldvolunteer>. Please reach out to blakefieldvolunteerteam@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.