



## 2018 COOKING GUIDELINES

In our shelter, we provide our clients with 3 meals a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. That's 1,095 breakfasts, lunches, and dinners annually. Welcome to "Club 1095"!

We're glad to have you as a member. It's community groups like yours that **plan** these meals, **purchase** the food for them, and **prepare and serve** them to our clients. Many thanks for lending a hand. Your in-kind donations of food and volunteer hours help us help some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Here's what you need to know to have a smooth and meaningful volunteer experience. Please share this information with all the members of your cooking team.

1. Assemble a team/group of 5-10 volunteers to assist you. For safety reasons, please do NOT bring children under the age of 10 along with you.
2. Schedule dates/meals with the Volunteer Coordinator (contact information below).
3. Plan a meal to serve. You can either make your meal in advance, off-site, or prepare it at the shelter kitchen. Select foods that serve a large number such as stews, chili, casseroles, pastas, or potpie. Plan to serve a main course along with side dishes, dessert, and a beverage. If you need something to supplement your meal, such as canned fruits or vegetables, salad dressings, or condiments, we usually can provide those, but it is best to check with the volunteer coordinator about their availability before you come in.
4. The Opportunity House shelter (dorms) has bed space for 75 people. Also, clients in our transitional housing programs/units are permitted to have their meals in our shelter; therefore, this could increase our meal count by 10-15 people. On average, plan as follows:
  - Lunch: 40-50 normally, can be as high as 75
  - Dinner: 75 normally
  - Breakfast: 50 normally, can be as high as 60

*Please contact me for an approximate client headcount 4-5 days ahead of when you are serving so that you may plan your meal accordingly: Julia VanTine, Volunteer Coordinator, [jvantine@opphouse.org](mailto:jvantine@opphouse.org) 610-374-4696 x227.*

5. Meal times are as follows:

- Lunch: served at **12:00 noon** every day.
- Dinner: served at **7:00 pm** every day.
- Breakfast: served at **6:00 am** during the week (M-F) and at **8:00 am** on weekends and holidays.

6. Parking: When you arrive at Opportunity House, please park in the fenced-in lot at the end of North Second Street (shelter entrance) closest to the railroad tracks. If space is unavailable, food can be dropped off at the shelter entrance and additional parking is available in the lot on Pear Street across from the Technology Center. Enter the building through the doors at the top of the ramp. You must knock to be let inside. Please check-in at the desk with the staff member who will assist you with whatever you need and please do not hesitate to ask for help!

7. Please complete the *Volunteer Sign in Sheet* given to you by the staff member when you arrive. Many of our grantees ask for the specific number of volunteer hours and \$ value of the food provided by our volunteers. Also, our auditors (and the IRS) have gotten very strict about documenting our in-kind donations. Please try to complete this form in its entirety. This is the **ONLY** way that we are able to track the amount of time and money each volunteer group donates.

8. Once your group arrives at Opportunity House you have full access to our kitchen. We provide all of the cooking and serving needs, i.e. pots and pans, plates, utensils, etc. (plates are in the cabinets under the serving window and trays are in the center aisle on the bottom; utensils are already set out in the dining area.) **We also provide hairnets and gloves. Please make sure each member of your group puts them on before handling food.** Please check the coolers for drinks; juice/soda is usually preferred. Please fill up the 5-gallon cooler with the beverage and then place it on the table in the dining area; you may also bring individually-packaged drinks, if preferred.

9. All food is served cafeteria-style from the counter window.

10. The women and children eat “family-style” upstairs in the women’s dorm (second floor) for dinner. Please have your female volunteers take trays of food upstairs for them; please place the food on the table and ask if they need more.

- The women will get their own drinks.
- Remember to also take them dessert (after dinner is served); otherwise, the kids will see dessert and may not eat their meals.
- ***PLEASE NOTE:*** *Males are not permitted upstairs in the women’s quarters; please have female volunteers deliver the food upstairs.*

Clients typically complete their meals in 15-20 minutes; you are free to eat your meal before you leave the shelter. ***The clients are responsible for all of the clean up as part of their program accountabilities.***

### **Important: Inclement Weather Procedure**

We do not want anyone to put themselves in danger. If your group will be unable to serve its scheduled meal due to bad weather, **please do not leave a voicemail. Rather, call the Shelter Desk at 610-374-4696, extension 247, and speak to someone directly.** The shelter staff needs to know of your cancellation as soon as possible so it may begin to make alternative plans for the upcoming meal.

If the weather is predicted to turn bad when you are scheduled to serve your meal, you may deliver your meal/food to Opportunity House earlier in the day and we will serve it for you.

We at Opportunity House sincerely appreciate the substantial time, energy and financial commitments you have put into making a pleasant and nutritious meal for our clients. Many, many thanks for your investment in them--we could not meet their needs without the continued support of great volunteers like you.

If you have any questions about these cooking guidelines or the meal procedures, please reach out. I'm at [jvantine@opphouse.org](mailto:jvantine@opphouse.org) or (610) 374-4696, ext. 227.

All the best,

Julia VanTine  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Opportunity House