

HELP DESK VOLUNTEER

There are many resources for people experiencing homelessness in Baltimore. Good information is hard to get. Help Desk Volunteers share information, give directions, and talk with clients. They empower clients with information, conversation, and care.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Set up the desk, computer, phone, flyer holders, and poster boards
- Check in with volunteer supervisor by phone, email, chat, or in-person
- Make copies of flyers, pamphlets, and other written materials
- Update the poster board with information about special events and meetings
- Greet each client with an offer for help
- Identify new or confused clients and offer help
- Use conversation with clients to determine their needs
- Provide clients with written information on Help Desk Information Cards
- Connect questions about health, staff, providers, and schedule to front desk
- Record each interaction in the Help Desk Journal
- Secure desk, computer, and phone at the end of the shift

EXPECTATIONS

- Sensitivity to people's mental, physical, and personal state
- Arrive at your scheduled shift, but communicate with volunteer supervisor when something changes
- Actively listen to each other's story and needs
- Have a supportive attitude
- Give respect and be respected
- Ask for help from staff or security when you do not know the answer or need support
- Understand that conversation is productive
- Comfortable with not being able to solve every problem
- Never make promises that you can't keep



TIME COMMITMENTS

HELP DESK HOURS:

Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

VOLUNTEER SHIFTS:

8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Volunteers work at least twice a month for two-hour shifts. Volunteers work for one month at a time.
Volunteer can extend their service each month.

IMPORTANT SKILLS

COMMUNICATION

- Talk with your supervisor about your ability to fill in shifts, make changes as needed, and about any problems you experience
- Communicate with clients about available supports and information at the help desk, and places to get other information if you are not sure
- Communicate with 1st floor staff if you need assistance when someone appears to need clinical help or is unsafe
- Talk with other volunteers in the volunteer group about your experiences, both bad and good

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN AND SHARE INFORMATION

- Learn about available resources for clients who come to HCH
- Share accurate and true information about what resources offer
- Be open-minded to new ideas or resources you may not know about already

TIME MANAGEMENT

- Be able to arrive on time for your scheduled shift
- Reschedule your shift with your supervisor with enough notice, unless it is an emergency.
- Plan ahead so that you do not overschedule or overcommit yourself to volunteer hours

SAFETY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Be responsible for the desk space and supplies, and make sure items are not left alone and are secured
- Use volunteer fob responsibly and maintain privacy of clients
- Be aware when a client may need to talk to a clinician or staff, and bring attention to this need appropriately

SUPPORTS

Health Care for the Homeless volunteers participate in an orientation to the expectations, guidelines, and boundaries of volunteering. New volunteers discuss safety and set goals for their volunteer role. Volunteers have regular check-ins with their volunteer supervisor to reflect and adjust their role.

A weekly Client Volunteer Group will be held to discuss volunteering experiences, and provide a space to problem solve issues that may come up. Group will also provide a space for members to work on and develop new skills to meet their volunteering and potential work goals. This group will be facilitated by Health Care for the Homeless staff, with a focus on group member discussion and will reflect the goals of the volunteers.

TOOLS AND ACCESS

Desk and chairs
Laptop with internet
Community Resource Guide
Phone
Volunteer badge
Pen and paper

CONTACT

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