

# HELP DESK VOLUNTEER

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There are plenty of resources for people experiencing homelessness in Baltimore yet good information can be hard to come by for some of our clients. Help Desk Volunteers empower our clients by sharing information, conversation and care.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Set up desk, computer, phone, flyer holders and poster boards
- Check in with volunteer supervisor by phone, email, or in-person
- Make copies of flyers, pamphlets and print materials
- Update the poster board with information about special events and meetings
- Greet every client and offer assistance
- Talk to clients to determine their needs
- Provide clients with brochures and other print materials
- Connect questions about health, staff, providers and appointments with front desk staff
- Record each interaction in the help desk journal
- Secure desk, computer and phone at the end of the shift

## EXPECTATIONS

- Be sensitive to people's behavioral, physical and personal situation
- Arrive for your scheduled shift but communicate with the 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
- Be comfortable with not being able to solve every problem
- Practice and model Health Care for the Homeless core values:
  - Dignity: fostering respect and compassion
  - Authenticity: practicing open and honest communication
  - Hope: finding and focusing on people's strengths
  - Justice: building a healthy community that includes everyone
  - Passion: challenging ourselves and the world around us
  - Balance: caring for ourselves and helping others do the same
- Keep patient and staff information confidential and do not share stories or photos without someone's consent



## **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 and 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 needs 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 Health Care for the Homeless
- Share accurate information about what resources are offered
- Be open-minded to new ideas or resources you may not know

### **TIME MANAGEMENT**

- Be able to arrive on time for your scheduled shift
- Provide enough notice if you need to reschedule your shift, 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 member and bring attention to this need appropriately

## **ORIENTATION & TRAINING**

Health Care for the Homeless volunteers participate in an orientation that includes information on safety, building access, relevant policies and procedures, guidelines for working with people experiencing homelessness, and a tour. Volunteers are also invited to relevant trainings and related events as their schedules permit. All volunteers have regular check-ins with their volunteer supervisor to discuss, reflect and problem-solve issues related to their role.

## **TOOLS AND ACCESS**

Desk and chairs  
Computer with internet  
Community resource guide  
Phone  
Volunteer badge  
Pen and paper

## **LOCATION**

Health Care for the Homeless  
421 Fallsway, Baltimore

## **CONTACT**

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