

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Room at the Inn



*3415 Bridgeland Drive
Bridgeton, MO 63044
314-209-9198*

September 2018

To our volunteers:

Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Room at the Inn! Over the past twenty five years thousands of volunteers have joined together to reach out and offer support to our homeless neighbors throughout the St. Louis region – to help them in their time of need. By committing to this work you have become a part of a great, long-standing tradition of service. Our volunteer program is this organization's greatest asset because you are the connection between our clients and the rest of our community. It is through you that our clients can see there are loving people in this community who genuinely care about their wellbeing and are willing to offer support. It is also through you that our community learns of the very real obstacles and difficulties facing the least fortunate. Our hope is to provide a challenging and fulfilling experience for you. If you ever have suggestions, questions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are more than willing to offer our support in any way that we can.

Thank you!

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Contents

Overview	5
Mission Statement	5
Who.....	5
What.....	5
When.....	5
Where	5
History.....	5
Night Site Partners	6
Volunteer Expectations.....	7
Demonstrating Compassion for our Guests.....	7
Volunteer Policies	8
Abuse of Agency Property	8
Additional Assistance for Clients.....	8
Americans with Disabilities Act Statement.....	8
Anti-Harassment	8
Client Conduct.....	8
Confidentiality.....	9
Communication.....	9
Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse / Neglect Screening.....	9
Donations/Gifting to Clients	10
Grievances.....	10
Outside Contact with Clients	10
Photo Release	10
Recording Hours.....	10
Religious Participation	11
Reporting Ethical or Professional Misconduct.....	11
Rules of Conduct	11
Safety and Security	11
Transportation Services	11
Young Clients, working with	12
Young Volunteers.....	13
Volunteer Procedures (Day Site).....	14
Expectations.....	14
Absences and Lateness	14
Dress Code	14
Emergency Procedures	14

Exit Interviews.....	15
Signing In and Out.....	15
Volunteer Name Tags.....	15
Volunteer Procedures (Night Site)	16
Expectations.....	16
Addressing Client Misconduct	16
Cancelation / Notice Procedures	16
Client Conduct.....	16
Client Supervision	17
Emergency Procedures	17
Exiting the Night Site Program	17
Feedback Process.....	18
Food Handling	18
Inclement Weather	18
Memorandum of Understanding	19
Night Site Schedule	19
Paperwork.....	19
Sleeping Arrangements.....	19
Securing Valuables	20
Travel Totes.....	20
Contact Information.....	21
Staff	21
Resources.....	21

Overview

Mission Statement

Sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, Room at the Inn provides emergency shelter and a stabilizing support system to women and families in need in St. Louis County, using a collaborative, interfaith effort of congregations and organizations throughout the St. Louis Region.

Who

Room at the Inn provides emergency shelter to homeless families and single women. While single men without children are not eligible to receive shelter at Room at the Inn, we do frequently serve men who present as part of a family. We serve up to 20 people on any given day with the help of around 60 congregations that provide overnight shelter.

Note: All clients at our shelter – and at most shelters in the St. Louis region – are referred by the Housing Resource Center (HRC). If you or someone you know needs assistance, call the HRC at: 314-802-5444

What

We offer a wide range of services to our clients. We offer a safe, clean shelter, food, showers, laundry facilities, personal supplies, and clothing, along with access to phones, fax, mail, and computers. Clients work with our Client Coordinator to identify their needs and create a plan to help them move toward self-sufficiency. We connect them with needed community services, which can entail meeting with a nurse, working with parenting experts, seeing a children’s therapist, participating in budgeting classes, etc.

We are constantly seeking new opportunities to leverage our network to help connect our clients to employment opportunities and other additional services. If at any point you are interested in exploring how you or those you know may use your skills, talents, and resources to help our clients, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at Room at the Inn.

When

Room at the Inn provides daytime and overnight shelter every day of the year. We oftentimes will grant extensions to clients who are making progress but need additional time to find housing.

Where

Our facility, or *day site*, is located at 3415 Bridgeland Drive, Bridgeton, MO 63044. This is where clients receive services throughout the daytime (Mon-Fri, 7am-5pm; Sat, 8am-5pm; Sun, 7:30am-5pm). In the evenings, we have roughly 60 local congregations throughout St. Louis and surrounding areas that serve as our *night sites* and host our clients for the evening.

History

Room at the Inn was designed to provide homeless women and families temporary shelter in unused church space. This model of shelter was born out of the Interfaith Hospitality Network / Family Promise and first came to the St Louis region under the umbrella of the Salvation Army. Introduced in St. Louis by members of McKnight Crossings Church of Christ in 1988, Room at the Inn provided overflow housing for the Salvation Army on weekends and during the cold winter months.

In February 1992, a grant from the St. Louis County Housing Resources Commission was awarded to Room at the Inn. With this grant, The Salvation Army expanded Room at the Inn to a 24-hour, year-round shelter. Program Director, Barbara Vogel Bixler, approached the Sisters of Divine Providence to house the expanded daytime program utilizing space in their Motherhouse (then Mount Providence, in Normandy).

In April 1993, The Salvation Army could no longer sponsor Room at the Inn. The Sisters of Divine Providence, wishing to see the program continue, made a corporate commitment to the homeless and became the sponsoring agents of Room at the Inn.

In March 1999, the Provincial offices of the Sisters were moved to the Providence Center in Bridgeton, near DePaul Hospital. One third of the facility was designed to accommodate the daytime shelter.

Throughout the past twenty five years over 100 congregations have partnered with Room at the Inn as we have served thousands of people in need.

Night Site Partners

All Saints Catholic Church
Arlington United Methodist Church
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
Bethalto Christian Church
Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church
Calvary Chapel St Louis County
Calvary Presbyterian Church
Central Reform Congregation
Christ Lutheran Church
Christ the King Catholic Church
Community Hope Center
Congregation Shaare Emeth
Dar Al-Jalal Mosque
Eliot Unitarian Chapel
First Assembly of God of East Alton
First Congregational Church of Webster Groves
First Presbyterian Church of Ferguson
First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood
First Presbyterian Church of St Louis
First United Methodist Church of Webster Groves
Glendale Presbyterian Church
Greater Grace Church
Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church
Holy Redeemer Catholic Church
Holy Spirit Catholic Church
Ignite Church
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Arnold
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Maplewood

Immanuel United Church of Christ
Kinloch Church of God
Kirkwood United Methodist Church
Living Word United Methodist Church
Lutheran Church of the Atonement
Main Street Church
Manchester United Methodist Church
Maryland Heights Church of Christ
McKnight Crossings Church of Christ
New Life Center
Our Lady of the Presentation Catholic Church
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
St Clement of Rome Catholic Church
St Cletus Catholic Church
St Ferdinand Catholic Church
St Gerard Majella Catholic Church
St Joseph Catholic Church
St Mark Lutheran Church
St Mary Magdalen Catholic Church
St Monica Catholic Church
St Norbert Catholic Church
St Peter Catholic Church
St Peter's United Church of Christ
St Rose Philippine Duchesne Catholic Church
Samuel United Church of Christ
Temple Emanuel
Trinity Christian Reformed Church
Webster Groves Christian Church
Wellspring United Methodist Church

Volunteer Expectations

Room at the Inn's volunteer selection procedure does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, handicap, citizenship, ancestry, familial status, or status as a veteran. Volunteers are treated with the same respect as paid staff. Certain types of conduct, including but not limited to failure to abide by the policies in this handbook, may warrant immediate discipline, including verbal counseling, written warnings, suspension, and/or dismissal without prior notice.

Any volunteer who believes he/she has been unfairly treated should bring it to the attention of an appropriate supervisor and utilize the procedure set forth in the Anti-Harassment Policy.

Demonstrating Compassion for our Guests

Americans are a compassionate people. Enormous numbers of people help their neighbors in need. Room at the Inn brings people in need together with people who want to help. We provide the framework that turns compassion into action.

- It's nice to hear your name, so learn the names of our guests, too.
- Labeling people creates invisible barriers. Remember that guests are guests, not the "homeless." Labeling – whether spoken, or printed on a posted sign – creates divisions and can foster an "us" and "them" syndrome.
- Personal questions can be tough to answer, so don't put guests in awkward positions by asking personal questions. If guests need to talk, give them the chance, but don't pry.
- We all like to keep some things to ourselves. All information about guests is confidential. Don't discuss guests' situations with other people.
- Sometimes we need to spend time alone. Respect guests' needs for quiet times alone or with family.
- We all have bad days that can create depression, sadness, and hopelessness. Allow guests the space to deal with their emotions. Be prepared to forgive outbursts without judging guests ungrateful.
- Avoid contradicting guests' instructions to their children. Always ask parents' permission before giving things to children.
- Adult guests should be treated like adults. Although our guests are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, please remember they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.
- Keep in mind why you chose to volunteer: offer to help and provide hospitality.
- Positivity is the key in situations of uncertainty. Make sure to greet the guests with sincere smiles – they are in a stressful situation.

Volunteer Policies

Abuse of Agency Property

All property and resources of ROOM are intended to provide assistance for our clients or to further our mission. Volunteers should never take food, clothing, or any other property of ROOM without receiving explicit permission from a supervisor. If you are in need of assistance, please notify a staff member, and we will make the appropriate referral for you.

Additional Assistance for Clients

Occasionally, volunteers or congregations have an interest in assisting a client in a capacity that goes beyond their agreed upon service. Volunteers have assisted clients by purchasing clothing, paying a utility debt, buying bus tickets, or connecting them with employment opportunities. While it is commendable when volunteers are able to support our clients in these ways, we are cautious to ensure that this generosity is not abused. If you are interested in assisting a client in ways that go beyond your role as a volunteer, we ask you to notify ROOM staff and allow us to facilitate this process rather than dealing directly with the client.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement

Students (or other volunteers) with disabilities are encouraged to contact Room at the Inn for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic completion of volunteer hours for various levels of course work including internship hours. Room at the Inn will make reasonable accommodations in all volunteer positions to enable participation by an individual with a documented disability that meets essential eligibility requirements

Anti-Harassment

In accordance to the ROOM Anti-Harassment Policy, if a volunteer feels they have been subjected to or witnessed unlawful harassment, please contact the Executive Director or Volunteer Coordinator and provide a written account of what occurred as soon as possible. Volunteers who initiate or engage in harassing behavior may receive a written warning up to and including termination of their volunteer service. The severity and pattern of behavior will be taken into consideration when determining appropriate action.

Client Conduct

All clients are expected to follow the rules while in our program regardless of whether they are at our day site or at our night sites. If a client's behavior is not in line with the listed expectations or if there are issues with rudeness, disrespect, etc., we ask that volunteers please inform staff. If you believe that someone is posing an imminent threat to themselves or to others, please call 911. Thank you for helping us ensure this continues to be a safe and rewarding program for everyone involved.

Clients are expected to act in accordance with the following rules:

- Clients should be respectful to our volunteers, staff, and each other.
- Smoking is permitted in the designated area near the back entrance outside our day site.
- Clients are responsible for safeguarding and taking their own medications, including those of their children.
- Clients are expected to wear shoes or socks at all times.
- Vulgar language is not permitted.
- Loud or vulgar music is not allowed.

- Family videos rated G or PG may be viewed at the day site. Pornographic material of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Clients are to refrain from any public display of affection. Clients are not to engage in sexual activity while at Room at the Inn.

Contact Staff immediately if you witness any of the following:

- Fighting by any adult or child
- Verbal aggression and/or physical punishment
- Use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Being physically aggressive
- Continuing to argue with others after being given a warning
- Possessing firearms or other weapons including pocket knives (toy weapons are discouraged as well; clients are to inform staff if a child has a toy like this)
- No call, no shows

Confidentiality

Staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to the guidelines of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Information gained concerning clients of Room at the Inn must be held confidential unless there is a danger to the client or to surrounding people and property. Such information includes, but is not limited to: clients' names, addresses, employers, relatives, dates of birth, social security numbers, telephone numbers, occupations, diagnoses, and treatment services prescribed.

- Any recounting of a volunteer's experience at ROOM should not include clients' names or any other details by which a client could be identified.
- No photos can be taken of the clients without having their written consent on file with ROOM staff.
- Confidentiality agreements should be signed by all volunteers with client interaction or access to client or donor information.

Communication

Room at the Inn will always do our best to clearly communicate volunteer expectations. Volunteers need to feel comfortable asking questions when they are not clear on directions and need to know whom to ask for assistance. If you are ever unclear or uncomfortable with your volunteer assignment, please talk to your direct supervisor or contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse / Neglect Screening

In an effort to ensure the safety and welfare of agency clients and their children, Room at the Inn requires all employees and volunteers to undergo a criminal background screening. This requirement does not apply to volunteers who do not have an opportunity for client interaction.

Room at the Inn utilizes the Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR) to screen volunteers as well as employees. There is a \$14.00 registration fee for those individuals registering with Missouri's FCSR for the first time. If an individual has previously registered with the FCSR and paid the fee, there are no additional charges for the updated screening.

Note: Any volunteers who are interacting with the clients and have not had a criminal background check must be accompanied by a staff member or a volunteer who has a background check on file.

- All volunteers who have regular client interaction must undergo a background check. Night Sites have the option of utilizing internal screening processes such as “Protecting God's Children” or the “Safe Sanctuary Program” in lieu of doing background checks through the FCSR as long as all active volunteers are still undergoing background checks.
- Criminal background checks should be updated on all volunteers annually.
- A recorded infraction from within the past five years for driving under the influence, driving while intoxicated, or other substance abuse, will disqualify a volunteer from serving as a driver for ROOM. A person’s driving record, in terms of the number of moving violations and history of accidents, should also be considered when recruiting drivers for the night sites.
- Criminal background checks deemed unacceptable based on past criminal convictions, or driving record, will be handled on an individual basis with consultation by the Room at the Inn Volunteer Coordinator as appropriate.

Note: It is not our intention for the cost of background checks to deter anyone from volunteering at our day site or at our night sites. If these fees present a hardship to you, please contact the volunteer coordinator to explore options for assistance.

Donations/Gifting to Clients

Sometimes our clients are in a situation where one barrier is all that is keeping them from housing. Some of our clients are dealing with problems that are more complicated that require a more comprehensive solution. If you are interested in helping a client, please contact ROOM staff rather than offering your support directly to the client.

Grievances

We certainly hope you have a positive experience with ROOM, and realize that there may be times when conflicts arise. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to bring any concerns regarding their experience to the attention of the ROOM staff as soon as possible.

Outside Contact with Clients

There are serious risks that can result from being in contact with clients outside of the context of your role as a volunteer. At the same time, we pride ourselves in being an organization where volunteers have the opportunity to build deeper relationships with our clients. We advise all volunteers to use prudent caution in limiting outside contact with current and former clients. In particular, we warn against giving out your last name, phone number, address, or email address or connecting through social media sites such as Facebook. We do realize that some night site congregations will extend invitations to clients to attend worship services or similar events. We warn against making plans to meet with a client for an activity or event that is not sponsored by Room at the Inn.

Photo Release

While volunteering with Room at the Inn, your picture may be taken for the agency’s promotional materials. If you do not want to be included in photographs, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator as applicable.

Note: Staff must have a media release on file for clients who are included in pictures or other media. If you are interested in taking pictures with clients, notify the staff so we can have necessary releases signed.

Recording Hours

Record your hours of service and report them to the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer hours are used as a tool for obtaining critical funding from various sources and provide important insight into the needs of our community.

Religious Participation

Room at the Inn cannot withhold services to clients or potential clients for not wanting to participate in religious activities. Volunteers are welcome to invite clients to participate in religious activities; however, staff, volunteers, or participating congregations should not proselytize or impose religious beliefs on clients. Religious instruction, worship, and/or counseling should never be made a basis for admission to shelter. Clients should not be discriminated against due to their race, sex, religion, etc. No distribution of literature which solicits on behalf of any organization or product may occur in working areas at any time or in non-working areas during working time.

Reporting Ethical or Professional Misconduct

Employees and volunteers have a duty to report their own ethical or professional misconduct as well as the misconduct of others. Employees and volunteers are expected to hold each other accountable for maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards. When there is an indication of illegal activities by employees or volunteers, the proper civil authorities should be notified immediately as well as the competent authority within Room at the Inn. Any other violations or suspected violations of ROOM policies or Rules of Conduct should be brought to the attention of the appropriate supervisor.

Rules of Conduct

All personnel, including volunteers, are prohibited from being engaged in the following activities:

- Theft or unauthorized possession of Room at the Inn property or dishonesty of any type.
- Reporting to the day site or to a night site under the influence of liquor or narcotics, or bringing or consuming either on Room at the Inn property or at a night site.
- Disorderly conduct with malicious intent which might result in injury.
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing or interfering with ROOM staff, clients, or volunteers.
- Insubordination or refusal to carry out reasonable instructions or directives.
- Willful destruction of ROOM equipment, merchandise, or property.
- Falsifying personnel records or giving any type of false information.
- Smoking within the day site facility.
- Gambling of any kind on Room at the Inn premises.
- Using offensive language.
- Violation of confidentiality.
- Any illegal activity.

Safety and Security

If a volunteer is injured, even slightly, the volunteer is expected to immediately stop the activity that caused the injury and seek first aid or medical attention if necessary. The volunteer must inform his or her supervisor about the incident and complete an **incident report form**. If the volunteer is unable to reach the supervisor, then the volunteer must contact the Volunteer Coordinator. The volunteer should not resume the activity until treatment has been provided and/or he or she has been given the approval from a supervisor to continue the activity.

Volunteers are discouraged from bringing large amounts of cash or other personal valuables to the day and/or night site, unless absolutely necessary. ROOM is not responsible for volunteers' personal items.

Transportation Services

Drivers who are transporting ROOM clients, staff, and/or volunteers are expected to take the following precautions:

- Obey all traffic laws (including speed limits).

- Avoid talking on a cell phone while driving unless **absolutely** necessary.
- **NO TEXTING WHILE DRIVING**
- Ensure all passengers are wearing seat belts, and parents have their children secured in car seats. If clients are refusing to wear seat belts, please notify staff.
- Children under eight years old, 80 pounds, or 4ft 9in must be in a car seat.
- Clients are not allowed to have open food or drinks in the vehicle.
- Clients are asked to bring no more than one reasonably-sized bag with them to the night sites and leave other belongings in the storage room at the day site.

Car Accidents

In the event of a car accident, as soon as it is safe to do so, volunteers should assess and address any emergency needs of everyone who is involved. The volunteer should notify the proper authorities (call 911) to arrange for any emergency assistance that is deemed necessary and to document what has occurred. Then the volunteer should notify Room staff by calling 314-209-9198. After hours number is 314-378-4984.

Driving Room at the Inn's Van

Room has a 14-passenger van that is available for use by volunteers transporting clients to their night site. Because a 14-passenger van handles differently from other vans and vehicles, drivers are expected to take extra precautions:

- If at any point you decide you are uncomfortable driving the ROOM van, you should notify the coordinator at your congregation and/or ROOM staff to make other accommodations.
- The ROOM van should not be driven at speeds over 60 miles per hour, even on a road with a higher posted speed limit.
- Avoid loading excessive weight behind the rear axle of the van.

Any person driving the ROOM van should have a copy of their valid driver's license on file with ROOM before signing out a key for the van. Possession of a valid driver's license will be verified annually by ROOM staff. The van should not be used for purposes other than those approved of by ROOM staff. We do reserve the right to check the driving history of any van drivers.

Young Clients, working with

Caring for and working with children and youth being served at Room at the Inn can be among the most rewarding aspects of this program; however, with that comes the responsibility to ensure a safe environment for our most vulnerable clients. To protect all of the children in our program, we require that all volunteers adhere to the following guidelines:

- Parents are responsible for the care of their own children and should know where their children are at all times.
- If engaging with minors in a room separated from their parent, the door should have a window or be left open. The parent should be reasonably close, and is expected to be available if needed for disciplinary reasons or emergencies.
- Drivers should avoid driving alone with children.
- A volunteer should not accompany a child into a restroom without a parent or at least one other adult present.
- Volunteers must use caution regarding physical displays of affection (e.g., hugging, etc.), language and topics of conversation used with or around minors.
- Staff members are required by law to report all instances of abuse (physical or otherwise). For recommendations of appropriate disciplinary methods clients are encouraged to speak with ROOM

staff. If volunteers witness any behavior they feel is abusive, please notify a ROOM staff member as soon as possible.

Young Volunteers

Our volunteer program is often at its best when we are able to include young volunteers. Involving youth can give the children of our clients a unique opportunity to get away from the daily routine and connect with people their own age. We do recognize there are risks that are inherent in our work, and, as a result, we require that all volunteers under the age of 14 be accompanied by an adult. Groups of young volunteers should be supervised by enough adults to ensure a safe, helpful, and meaningful experience.

Volunteer Procedures (Day Site)

Expectations

- Your first responsibility is to know your own duties and how to do them promptly, correctly, and pleasantly.
- Cooperate with staff and your fellow volunteers and maintain a good team attitude.
- Students are expected to grasp opportunities for personal development that are offered.
- Meet with the Volunteer Coordinator for an orientation session prior to your scheduled start date.
- All communications with or concerning ROOM clients should be kept confidential.
- Demonstrate cultural competence/sensitivity.
- Report for duty on time.

Absences and Lateness

Notify the Volunteer Coordinator if you know that you will be late or absent. The Volunteer Coordinator, Cindy Warren, can be contacted by email at cwarren@roomstl.org or by phone at 314-209-9181, ext. 111. Volunteers should make every effort to be on time to their work assignments.

Dress Code

All volunteers must dress appropriately for the job you are doing. It is best neither to overdress nor underdress. Casual clothing is fine, but ROOM asks that your attire be neat and conservative.

Emergency Procedures

Fire

If the fire alarm sounds, **everyone** in the building **must evacuate**. Residents should be directed to the nearest and safest exit out of the building and gather at a reasonable distance from the fire. The area should be checked to make sure clients are not sleeping. Doors should be closed when leaving rooms. Feel the doors for heat before entering. A ROOM staff person will take the client sign-out sheet upon leaving the building. All staff and clients will remain outside until the fire department designates the building is safe to enter.

Tornado

All staff, clients, and volunteers should go into rooms with no windows (preferably the laundry room, shower rooms or client storage room). Staff should bring a flashlight.

Earthquake

Earthquakes occur without warning. Most injuries occur as people are entering or leaving buildings.

- Stay Calm.
- If indoors, stay indoors. If outdoors, stay outdoors.
- If indoors, get under a desk or table and stay away from windows and outside walls.
- If outdoors, move away from buildings, trees, walls, and utility lines. Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops.
- If in a vehicle, pull to the side of the road and stop the vehicle. Do not park under overpasses or power lines. Stay in the vehicle until the shaking stops.
- Be prepared for additional earthquakes or “aftershocks”

Bomb Threat

If a phone call is received with a bomb threat, ask the caller for the location of the bomb. Assume that the threat is valid, and page all in the building to evacuate. Call 911 as soon as you are safely away from the building.

All employees, volunteers, and clients are to evacuate the building and stay at a distance of at least 300 feet from the building. No one is to re-enter the building until the police or fire department give clearance.

Lockdown

If anyone observes that a dangerous situation is occurring, the building will be locked until further notice. The receptionist will call 911. No one may leave the building. Neither staff nor clients are to open doors for anyone.

Other Emergencies

Press PAGE button on the office phone to notify all staff of the need for assistance in your particular area.

Exit Interviews

As you are ending your time as a volunteer with ROOM, we ask you to contribute any suggestions or other feedback that might improve the quality of our program.

Signing In and Out

All volunteers and students are to sign in and out for a work assignment. A clipboard is located outside of the Volunteer Coordinator's office. Accurately reporting service hours is critical in our ability to receive funding. In case of an emergency, this sheet will tell us what volunteers are in the building at any given time.

Volunteer Name Tags

Pick up a volunteer name tag from the Volunteer Coordinator's office to wear each time you come to volunteer. These should be returned to the office when you are ready to leave.

Volunteer Procedures (Night Site)

Expectations

- Volunteers are asked to provide food, fellowship, transportation, and shelter to clients in our program.
- Provide qualified and capable drivers to transport the clients.
- Conduct necessary background checks and collect confidentiality agreements.
- Share pertinent emergency evacuation procedures with clients.
- Demonstrate cultural competence/sensitivity.

Addressing Client Misconduct

Clients are expected to follow the rules while in our program regardless of whether they are at our day site or at our night sites. If a client's behavior is not in line with the listed expectations or if there are issues with rudeness, disrespect, etc., we ask volunteers to please inform ROOM staff. If the issue can be addressed over the phone, a ROOM staff person is on call and available any time by calling 314-378-4984. Volunteers can also contact the day site at 314-209-9198 during business hours. If you believe that someone is posing an imminent threat to themselves or to others, please call 911. Thank you for helping us ensure that our program continues to be a safe and rewarding for everyone involved.

Cancelation / Notice Procedures

Night sites play an essential role in Room at the Inn's service to our clients. We realize that there may be unexpected events that will prevent a congregation from serving on their scheduled night. When a night site is unable to serve we have to keep our clients overnight at our day site, which requires that we either find a volunteer or staff member that can stay with them.

We try our best to work around any issues that arise. Other partnering congregations are a great resource for filling in on a moment's notice. The Volunteer Coordinator is happy to help troubleshoot with you and explore other options. If you do need to cancel an evening of service, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible so we can begin making alternate accommodations.

Client Conduct

Clients are expected to act in accordance with the following rules:

- Clients should be respectful to our volunteers, staff, and each other.
- Clients are not allowed cell phones or electronic devices at the night sites. Clients who need to use the phone in the evenings are expected to make arrangements with staff before leaving for the night sites. Any such arrangements will be recorded in the Communication log of the binder in the overnight tote.
- Night sites will designate an area outside their facility where smoking is permitted. Smoking rules are left to the discretion of each individual night site, and some sites may choose to restrict or ban smoking. Clients must respect the night sites' decisions and limit or refrain from smoking as instructed.
- When clients are picked up from the day site and taken to the night site, they must remain at the night site for the entire night. Once they are at the congregation facility, they are not allowed to leave and return.
- Clients are not permitted to have any visitors while staying at the night site.

- Clients are responsible for safeguarding and taking their own medications including medication for their children.
- We recognize our volunteers take time to provide nutritious meals for our clients. Clients are not allowed to order or bring in food from the outside. Any clients with dietary restrictions are asked to notify staff ahead of time so that the appropriate accommodations can be made.
- Clients are expected to wear shoes or socks at all times while not sleeping.
- Vulgar language is not permitted.
- Loud or vulgar music is not allowed.
- Family videos rated G or PG may be viewed at the day site or at the night sites. Videos are not to be taken from or brought to the night sites unless special permission is granted by ROOM staff or volunteers.
- **Pornographic material of any kind is not tolerated.**
- Clients are to refrain from any public display of affection, and, considering the sleeping arrangements provided, clients are not to engage in sexual activity while at Room at the Inn.
- Unless a married couple, men and women should sleep in separate areas. Some facilities may have an extra room where married couples may sleep.

Client Supervision

At least one volunteer should be present and available at all times while clients are present. If volunteers are not in a room with a client, the client should know how to contact a volunteer.

Emergency Procedures

The following emergency procedures, as well as relevant forms, are located in the blue emergency folder that is located in the binder which is brought to and from the night site each evening in the travel tote.

- In the event of a life threatening emergency, call 911.
- If the emergency is non-life threatening or if an ambulance has already been called, call the Room at the Inn cell number at 314-378-4984. Room staff will arrange for a cab, if necessary.
- If the client needs to leave the site for emergency purposes, give them an Emergency Card from the Emergency Folder so they can remain in contact with staff.
- If a parent is taken by ambulance to the hospital and is forced to leave his/her children at the night site, the client should fill out a Temporary Release of Childcare form. This releases care to Room at the Inn. Contact a ROOM staff member as soon as possible so we can help assess the situation and determine the best course of action for the children. If necessary, we can pick up the children and transport them to the hospital, to the day site, etc.
- In the event of an emergency or other significant event, please fill out an Incident Report form. This Helps to keep ROOM staff informed and allows staff to respond to the needs of our clients and volunteers.

Exiting the Night Site Program

While we are asking congregations to commit to the night site program for at least one year at a time, you are certainly free to end your service with Room at the Inn at any time. Due to the length of time it takes for us to recruit, develop, and train a new night site, we ask the congregations to work with the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure adequate notification. It is helpful to notify ROOM at least six months prior to exiting the program.

Exit Interviews

We greatly value feedback from all of our volunteers throughout their time with Room at the Inn. Opinions, ideas, and feedback are greatly appreciated from groups as they are exiting the program. We would like to arrange for congregations exiting the program to meet with our Volunteer Coordinator. This gives us all an opportunity to learn from our partnership with one another and to continue strengthening this program as we strive to better serve our clients.

Feedback Process

The Volunteer Coordinator will schedule time to meet annually with the coordinator(s) of each individual night site to evaluate their volunteer program. This is a time to ensure volunteers are being properly screened and trained; to recognize the program's strengths; to identify opportunities for improvement; and to set goals for the future. The process is intended to give coordinators an opportunity to take a step back and critically assess the volunteer program at their individual night site. Also, to evaluate the night site program as a whole, share feedback, and work together with the Night Site Coordinator to help better serve the homeless women and families of St. Louis County.

Food Handling

Meal coordinator should review the Food Safety and Inspection Service guidelines at www.fsis.usda.gov and contact the local health department for information about the rules and regulations governing preparation and serving of food for groups. The person-in-charge should provide instructions to the volunteers, answer questions, and oversee the preparation, service, and cleanup of the Night Site meals.

Leftover food may be sent back to the day site the next morning if properly refrigerated and stored. Food must be handled and delivered by the driver. Only send back food if there is enough to share with all of our clients.

Insurance / Liability

A congregation's insurance coverage would cover a night site ministry just as it would any other ministry using the facility. A driver's auto insurance would cover transporting clients the same way it would when transporting a friend. ROOM has liability insurance that covers any remaining expenses once the primary coverage has been exhausted. This liability insurance may not cover damages when the result is gross negligence. We encourage congregations to consult their insurance company to discuss the implications of becoming a night site.

Inclement Weather

Emergency Plans

Coordinators should ensure their night site has emergency plans in place and their volunteers are prepared to respond in the event of fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.

Snow Days

In the event the weather is creating hazardous driving conditions, we will typically keep the clients overnight at our day site and cancel our night sites for the evening. If weather forecasts indicate it may be unsafe for volunteers to transport our clients, coordinators should contact the Volunteer Coordinator or other ROOM staff to determine what action is warranted.

Memorandum of Understanding

Room at the Inn has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each night site. This is not a legally binding contract, but is a written agreement that expresses our expectations of one another as we strive to provide safe and adequate overnight shelter to the people we have come together to serve.

Night Site Schedule

The following schedule is an example of a typical evening for a Room at the Inn night site. Individual night sites may find it helpful to adjust this schedule to better serve their needs.

3:00pm	Coordinators are in contact with Room at the Inn for client number and ages
5:00pm	Drivers pick up clients at the day site and transport them to the night site
6:00pm	Dinner at the night site
7:00pm	Fellowship time with clients
7:30pm	Outside doors are locked; smoking ceases at this time
9:00pm	Children are in bed and quiet
10:00pm	Adults in bed and lights are out
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5:30am	Lights on; clients wake up
6:00am	Breakfast
6:30am	Drivers transport clients to the day site; volunteers clean up
7:00am	Arrive at day site

It is important for clients to return to the day site by 7:00am, Mondays through Fridays. This allows school-aged children time to catch a cab or bus to school and adults can get to work or to other meetings and appointments. Clients should be returned by 8:00am on Saturdays and 7:30am on Sundays. They should be returned at 8:00am on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas.

Paperwork

Coordinators are responsible for keeping accurate records for their night site volunteers.

- **Volunteer contact information** is kept by the individual night site's coordinator(s).
- **Volunteer hours** should be logged in the night site binder each evening that a night site serves. The coordinator of the night site is responsible for logging these hours or delegating that responsibility to another volunteer.
- **Confidentiality agreements** are kept on file by the Volunteer Coordinator. Coordinator(s) of a given night site should ensure all of their volunteers have signed a confidentiality agreement and filed them in the night site binder for the Volunteer Coordinator. These are to be updated annually.
- **Background checks** should be facilitated and records kept and secured by the congregation's office when possible. If this is not possible, arrangements can be made with the Volunteer Coordinator for facilitation and storage at ROOM.
- **Memorandum of Understanding** should be kept by the congregation's office. Room at the Inn will also keep a copy of the signed agreement.

Sleeping Arrangements

Night sites should arrange for families with men to sleep in an area separate from the rest of the clients. If hosting clients in one large room, it suffices to have men on one end and women on the other end.

Parents are strongly discouraged from sharing a bed with infants in order to reduce the risk of suffocation and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Securing Valuables

ROOM is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen during your time as a volunteer. We recommend the night sites designate a secured area where volunteers can keep their personal belongings, and encourage volunteers to leave valuables at home.

Travel Totes

Upon arrival at the day site, one driver will be given a large plastic tote with the following supplies for the night site:

Night Site Binder

- **Cover Page:** This has contact information for Room at the Inn staff as well as emergency contact numbers. If any issues come up feel free to contact the Volunteer Coordinator at any time.
- **Confidentiality Agreements:** If any volunteers have not signed this form, please have them do so and leave signed copies in the front pocket of the Binder.
- **Communication Log:** This lists the clients staying at your night site for the evening along with any relevant notes. There is space to leave comments for the Volunteer Coordinator.
There are a number of reasons why it's very helpful for you to inform us about issues: 1) if you don't tell us, then the group hosting the next night is likely to encounter the same issues (and while it may not be a big deal tonight, maybe it will be tomorrow), 2) we occasionally hear about these issues from clients and it's helpful for us to have your more-objective perspective, and most importantly, 3) having this information can help us connect clients with the resources and help they need. (Please see Client Conduct on page 8)
- **Volunteer Log:** Tracking volunteer hours helps us monitor the size and scope of our volunteer program. Last year we had over 2000 volunteers that participated in our night site program! Keeping accurate records allows us to track growth and, in some cases, attract additional funding.
- **Emergency Folder:** This includes Emergency Procedures, Emergency Cards, and Incident Report Forms.
- **Master Calendar:** Check what other congregations are involved as night sites
- **Volunteer Handbook:** Use this for your reference. If additional copies are needed, please ask.
- **Med Pack**
Basic Medical Supplies: Includes feminine hygiene products, Band-Aids (small and large), alcohol- alcohol swabs, rubber gloves, calamine lotion, cotton swabs, and hand sanitizer. Clients are responsible for managing their own medications and those of their children. Clients should have everything they need for the evening ahead of time.

Contact Information

Room at the Inn

3415 Bridgeland Dr.
Bridgeton, MO 63044
314-209-9198

After Hours EMERGENCY Only 314-378-4984

Monday - Friday: 7:00am to 6:00pm
Sat: 8:00am to 6:00pm
Sun: 7:30am to 5:30pm

Staff:

Monica Barnett	Administrative Coordinator	W:314-209-9198, ext. 104 mbarnett@roomstl.org
Angie Hamilton	Client Coordinator	W: 314-209-9198, ext. 115 ahamilton@roomstl.org
Mary Kaminski	Development Coordinator	W: 314-209-9198, ext. 100 maryk@roomstl.org
Melanie Matthew	Program Coordinator	W: 314-209-9198, ext. 110 mmatthew@roomstl.org
Cindy Warren	Volunteer Coordinator	W: 314-209-9181, ext. 111 cwarren@roomstl.org
David Weber	Interim Executive Director	W: 314-209-9181, ext. 106 dweber@roomstl.org

Resources

Housing Helpline	314-802-5444
Suicide Prevention Hotline	314-647-4357
BHR: Mental Health Crisis Hotline	314-469-6644

Connect with Room at the Inn online at:

facebook.com/roomstl

twitter.com/innstl

roomstl.org

Thank you for choosing to make a difference!

Room at the Inn



Shelter with a Purpose, Clients with a future

www.roomstl.org