

**Boston ~~R~~escue Mission**

*Transforming lives since 1899*

# Volunteer Handbook

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: 39 Kingston Street:  
Boston MA, 02111

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 120069  
Boston, MA 02112

Phone: (617) 338-9000

Front Desk: Ext. 1242

Volunteer Dept: Ext. 1230

Development: Ext. 1213

Kitchen: Ext. 1225

Maintenance: Ext. 1238

Web site: <http://www.brm.org>

# INTRODUCTION TO THE MISSION

## MOTTO

Transforming lives since 1899.

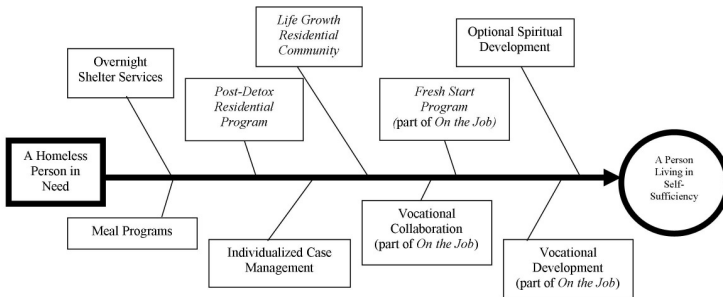
## VISION STATEMENT

A healing community where lives are transformed through Christ's Love, Grace and Compassion.

## MISSION STATEMENT

- To provide the basic necessities of life to all our guests.
- To empower our guests to become valued members of society while raising awareness for their plight .
- To reflect the Love of God in all we do with integrity.

## OUR PROGRAMS—A CONTINUUM OF CARE



### ***Overnight Shelter Services***

The Boston Rescue Mission is the largest overnight shelter in Massachusetts. Guests are provided a nightly meal, access to bathroom and shower facilities, and a morning meal before departing the Mission. Guests also have an opportunity to speak with a case manager who can provide counseling that encourages guests to explore recovery programs.

## ***Meal Programs***

The Boston Rescue Mission serves an average of 137,000 meals annually. The residential program clients are served three meals per day. The overnight shelter guests are provided with a meal upon entry and one before leaving in the morning. The Mission also serves a sixth meal in the afternoon called the Community Meal, or Three o'clock meal. This meal is open to anyone from the community.

Our food pantry program provided over 27,000 meals last year to individuals and families in the city of Boston. Participants must present a picture I.D., rent receipt, utility bill, and proof of residency in the city of Boston in order to qualify for the food pantry program. Boston's lack of affordable housing has significantly increased the demand for the food pantry program over the last few years. The pantry program is run primarily by volunteers.

## ***Post-Detox Residential Program***

Eighty-five percent of people who experience homelessness struggle with addiction. The Post-Detox Residential Program serves homeless individuals coming directly out of a 3-5 day detoxification program within a local hospital or a licensed detox center. People emerging from these programs are emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually vulnerable. The program offers intensive case management, individual counseling, self-help referral, and relapse prevention services through on-going supervision for up to 3 months. Many of the graduates will move to recovery homes in the greater Boston Area. There are currently 20 beds for men on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Mission and 10 beds for women on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The Mission serves over 400 people each year through this program.

## ***Life Growth Residential Community***

The Life Growth Residential Community is a halfway house program that assists homeless individuals attain and maintain independent living. The Men's Life Growth Community is a 26-bed program, and the Women's Life Growth Community is a 20-bed program. Candidates for the program must have achieved 30 days of sobriety and a referral by a Boston Rescue Mission case manager or other relevant professional for admission consideration. Many of our Post-Detox program graduates move into the Life Growth Community.

Life Growth is designed to provide a supportive Twelve Step recovery environment to those who are homeless as they transition to independent living. Case management services, on and off-site recovery services, mental health assessment, and referrals are provided as program participants pursue part or full-time employment. Participants are required to complete the Fresh Start Education Curriculum. The length of the Life Growth program is based on achieving goals set by the participant and their case manager; typical duration is six months to two years.

### ***On the Job (a component of Life Growth)***

As a component of its Continuum of Care model, the Boston Rescue Mission offers the *On the Job* program, which is broken down into three segments – Fresh Start, Vocational Collaboration, and Vocational Development.

The Fresh Start component provides a series of 8-week development classes covering basic skills, such as proper hygiene and personal finance. It is during this that the employment search is first explored through a job development course. Concepts covered include on-the-job etiquette, as well as resume development and interview preparation. Fresh Start classes are primarily conducted by volunteers.

The Vocational Collaboration component of *On the Job* is centered on partnerships with several employment-related programs that exist in Boston. Rather than duplicating these programs in-house, the Mission refers clients to successful programs including the MAP Program, Project Place, IMPACT Employment Services, and others.

The Vocational Development aspect of *On the Job* is focused on preparing and directing our clients to well-matched, long-term employment opportunities and ensuring that the client can maintain that employment. This is accomplished through meetings with a client's case manager to discuss employment options and strategies as well as through the Mission's *Employment Referral Network*, a network of strategic partners who have agreed to provide interviews and/or internships for qualified applicants.

### ***Outreach Program***

The goal of Boston Rescue Mission's outreach program is to meet homeless individuals who are living on the street in order to provide them with case management services. The outreach program is designed to build relationships with those utilizing shelter services in order to ascertain their readiness to move to a higher degree of independent living. This program also serves as a referral source for an external detox program which may lead to eventual entry into the Mission's Post-Detox program.

### ***Spiritual Development***

Although none of our guests are required to participate in the Mission's spiritual development offerings, we realize that many clients desire more than just the physical services we offer. To fill this need we offer options including one-on-one counseling with our Director of Spiritual Development and Outreach, as well as mentoring relationships, retreats, and community gatherings.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**MEAL PROGRAMS/KITCHEN HELP** – The Boston Rescue Mission provides three meals a day for our Post-Detox and Life Growth clients, two meals for overflow shelter guests, and one daily afternoon meal open to the public. Volunteers are needed to help prepare and set-up for the meal, serve, and assist in the clean-up process. Participating in meal programs is one of the most popular volunteer opportunities.

**OVERFLOW SHELTER** – The Boston Rescue Mission is New England's largest emergency overflow shelter. Volunteers are needed to assist in signing-in guests, assisting with the evening overflow meal, and helping to distribute supplies to shelter guests.

**OUTREACH** — On Saturday mornings, volunteers help to prepare a meal and transport it to Boston Common, where they distribute it to the homeless. Volunteers may also accept prayer requests and interact with the population. Volunteers help to clean up and return outreach materials.

**FRONT DESK** – The front desk volunteer position is a very important job inside the Mission. Front desk volunteers are responsible for signing-in and out Post-Detox and Life Growth clients. Other duties include answering the phone, paging clients and staff, signing-in volunteers, and distributing material to visitors seeking information. This position requires a term of training and a commitment to fill a regular shift.

**MAINTENANCE** – Due to the volume of clients and guests who are served by the Mission each year, the Kingston House requires a great deal of upkeep and repair. Maintenance volunteer duties may include cleaning, painting, repairing, and home improvement. Volunteers particularly talented in specific areas such as electrical, plumbing, mechanical are eagerly sought.

**ADMINISTRATIVE** – Our behind-the-scenes volunteers are essential to the organization. Administrative volunteers may assist staff in a secretarial capacity or may work with the development or accounting departments. Duties may include clerical work, recording gifts, special analysis, and fundraising.

**FRESH START INSTRUCTORS** – The Fresh Start program informs clients and facilitates discussions about a variety of basic life skills, ranging from health and wellness to personal finance. Many of the courses are taught by volunteers who work in fields related to the Fresh Start curriculum. Classes are conducted once a week for one hour.

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES** – We are very appreciative of doctors, nurses, dentists, lawyers, and other professionals who give their time to help clients receive attention and services the otherwise could not afford. When a professional commits to a set period of time we encourage clients to make an appointment so that the volunteer's time is well-used.

**SPIRITUAL MENTORING** – This program provides volunteers with opportunity to develop a consistent one on one relationship with someone who is new to the Christian faith. It is a relationship that includes but is not limited to bible study, prayer, encouragement and coaching in the basics of the Christian faith.

**EVENT PLANNING** – The Development department is periodically in need of volunteers to assist in the preparation for and execution of fundraising events. We are always trying to raise general awareness of the Boston Rescue Mission and hope to do this with several events throughout the year.

**ART/CREATIVE SERVICES** -- Projects will include drama, painting, music, drawing, collage, photography, mixed media, sculpture, and many other creative expressions. This opportunity can be attuned to specific skills but those without specific artistic skills are more than welcome.

## Snapshot of Homelessness in Boston

*(Adapted from the 2005 – 2006 Annual Census Report of Homelessness in the City of Boston available from [http://www.cityofboston.gov/shelter/pdfs/report\\_05.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/shelter/pdfs/report_05.pdf))*

**Population:** On the night of the census there were 6,365 men, women and children counted.

**Families:** The total number of homeless men, women, and children in family emergency shelter was 1,704. The total number of homeless families in shelter, domestic violence and transitional programs was 746.

### **Homeless Individuals:**

Men: 3,452 individuals

Women: 1,558 individuals

### **Number of homeless adults and children:**

On the street: 261

In emergency shelter: 1716

In hospitals: 185

In substance abuse treatment beds: 267

In transitional programs: 1074

In Residential programs: 484

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How should I dress while volunteering at the Boston Rescue Mission?**

Please dress casually and comfortably, but we also ask that you dress modestly while you are serving at the Boston Rescue Mission. This provides an opportunity to model appropriate dress for our residents.

### **What is security like at the Mission?**

There are staff members at the Mission 24 hours a day, with case management staff on-site from 8 AM to 10 PM daily.

### **How should I sign-in as a volunteer?**

When you come to the Mission as a volunteer please ask whoever is staffing the front desk to have you sign in the volunteer log. This is important, as it helps us keep better records.

### **What should I do if a resident asks me for money?**

The Boston Rescue Mission does not encourage giving or loaning money. Most of the time, the money that is being requested is not really necessary. If you are approached by a resident and asked for money we suggest that you refer them to their case manager for assistance if it is a valid need.

### **When should I break the confidentiality agreement?**

Although we believe that our residents should have the utmost confidentiality, there are some situations where the benefit of sharing information outweighs that of keeping confidentiality. Examples of this might include if a resident is threatening to hurt himself or someone else, or is indicating that they are planning on returning to an addiction. If this occurs, please inform a staff member immediately.

### **Should I be concerned about getting sick from being around the Mission?**

Because we operate an overnight shelter for individuals who do not have housing, as well as residential programs, we can have anywhere between 100 to 200 individuals in the Mission at a given time. With this amount of people there is the potential for a lot of germs to be spread. We suggest that you practice basic hygiene and wash your hands often while you are spending time at the Mission.

### **Am I allowed to take pictures at the Mission?**

The Boston Rescue Mission strives to protect our residents' confidentiality. We require that the resident signs a release of information form before any pictures are taken.

### **What if I can't make an appointment or will be late?**

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator between 9am and 5pm, Tuesday through Saturday. You may also leave a message in the community voice mailbox (ext. 1254) although it is probably not a good idea if the message is time-sensitive.

### **Can I use the elevator instead of taking the stairs?**

Our elevator is designated as a freight elevator and is not used to transport individuals except for those with accessibility needs.

### **Is there anywhere that smoking is prohibited?**

Smoking inside the building is prohibited. If you are going to smoke while you are at the Mission, please do so away from the front entryway of the building.

## **POLICY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the goal of the Boston Rescue Mission to promote a workplace that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, and where volunteers are treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect. This policy applies to all BRM volunteers, as well as all staff, clients, and guests.

## **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to provide consistent guidelines for all employees, guests, and volunteers regarding the use of alcohol and drugs. The Boston Rescue Mission strives to provide a safe, drug and alcohol free environment for all its employees, guests, and volunteers.

Mission volunteers will come into contact with, and may work in the company of, Boston Rescue Mission clients who are in the process of alcohol and drug recovery. Volunteers are expected to behave appropriately and to be in suitable mental and physical condition during volunteer assignments, and to perform volunteer duties in manner that does not imperil your safety or that of your fellow volunteers.

To assure the Boston Rescue Mission and its drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs are not jeopardized, volunteers are prohibited from the use, sale, or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, or of paraphernalia associated with illegal drugs. The unlawful manufacturing, distribution, dispensation, or use of a controlled substance on Boston Rescue Mission property or while conducting Boston Rescue Mission business off the premises is absolutely prohibited.

## ***Confidentiality Agreement***

Due to the sensitive nature of the programs that are provided by the Boston Rescue Mission, we require all volunteers and interns to sign a confidentiality agreement assuring that the rights of our clients are protected. The Boston Rescue Mission has a zero tolerance policy for any breach of client confidentiality, and a volunteer or an intern can be terminated if he or she is found to have broken this agreement. The mission statement for this organization states that the Boston Rescue Mission seeks to provide the basic necessities of life to all who need them, to serve all people in the times of need while raising awareness for their plight, to empower all people to become valued members of society, and to reflect the love of God in all we do with integrity. In order to fulfill these objectives, the clients must feel secure in the fact that their situations will not be discussed or alluded to with anyone not affiliated with the Boston Rescue Mission.

Thank you for your cooperation to assure that the rights of those we serve are protected.

## ***Volunteer Code of Conduct***

During your volunteer service at the Boston Rescue Mission you will have the chance to develop meaningful relationships with our residential clients and guests. The following policies should always be observed, however, when dealing with clients and guests.

- Volunteers should not enter into any relationship of a sexual or romantic nature or act as legal guardian to guests or clients.
- Volunteers should not handle money, or give loans to, or request loans from, guests or clients.
- Volunteers should not rent real estate to, take in as a roommate, or invite home as an overnight guest, guests or clients.
- Volunteers should not hire or solicit guests or clients for personal jobs or errands.

If you are presented with any of the above situations, please contact your program supervisor or the volunteer coordinator immediately. Situations such as these can compromise the integrity of the volunteer role and can jeopardize the volunteer's ability to participate in the program.

I have completed the Boston Rescue Mission Volunteer Orientation and understand procedure, responsibilities, and guidelines.

I have read the policies on discrimination and harassment, drug-free workplace, volunteer code of conduct, and confidentiality, and I will abide by these policies while volunteering at The Boston Rescue Mission. Further, I understand that any violation of these policies may seriously jeopardize my volunteer position at The Boston Rescue Mission.

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Volunteer's Name

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Volunteer's Signature

Date

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Staff Signature

Date

**Boston *Rescue* Mission**

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