



Keeping families close®

Meal Group Guidelines

*Thank you for your interest in making a meal for our families! The following parameters prioritize the safety of our families, volunteers and staff alike, so all groups must abide by these rules in order to participate in making a meal. **Failure to comply with all rules may result in immediate dismissal from the RMHC-ENC location, and may hinder future participation in volunteer opportunities.***

Participation Requirements:

- **Groups may include a maximum of six (6) volunteers.** Everyone who comes with your group will count toward this total and must be there to actively participate.
- **You must watch the Meal Orientation video and fill out the brief survey at least 3 days before the meal date.** The link will be automatically sent to you after you sign up for a date. Only one person per group has to fill it out, but we suggest sharing the video with everyone who is coming to cook.
- **Meal Group Volunteers must be at least 12 years old.** Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. We can only accommodate up to 3 children in a meal group.
- **All volunteers must be completely illness/symptom free (cold, flu, fever, stomach virus, etc.).**
- **Volunteers, including children, must wear gloves while handling food.** RMHC-ENC will provide gloves upon arrival. Additional health practices during participation will include frequent hand washing and changing gloves, and no face, hair or phone touching.
- **The use of face masks is optional.** We have masks on site if you would feel more comfortable wearing one.

Program Guidelines:

- **We offer Meal Group spots 7 days a week, Sunday – Saturday.** Please check our website for availability as it may change from week to week.
- **If you plan to prepare breakfast, we ask it is ready between 8:00-8:30am.**
- **If you plan to prepare lunch, we ask it is ready between 11:30am -12:00pm**
- **If you plan to prepare dinner, we ask it is ready between 5:30-6:00pm.**
- **Prepare to be here for a minimum of 2-3 hours** (cooking, individually packaging and cleaning). Please arrive early enough to have meals prepared by the times requested above.
- **Please prepare enough food for 25-30 people at minimum.**
- **Dress code is casual and respectful.** Please wear closed toe shoes.

- **We encourage you to use items from our pantry.** You are welcome to visit our pantry prior to your visit and see what is available for your use.
- **The kitchen is stocked with the normal pots, pans, serving dishes and utensils.** If you need a specialty item, please call to make sure we have it or you can bring your own.

Food Safety:

- **Cooking on-site:** Your group will receive direction from a staff member during orientation to safely prepare, cook and assemble all food in the RMH Kitchen. All food must be temp tested by an RMH staff member before serving.
- **Safety Practices:** Volunteers must practice good food safety hygiene, including frequent hand-washing eliminating cross contamination/raw foods, wearing hairnets/hair ties, face masks and gloves, etc. All refrigerated items should stay chilled as long as possible and food in the kitchen should always be covered.

Meal Service and Clean Up:

- **Packing Meals:** To reduce the spread of germs and for the convenience of our families, volunteers will pack all prepared food into individually sized containers for families to enjoy either during or after the mealtime.
- **On-Site Dining:** RMHC-ENC families often have inconsistent schedules due to patient treatments and may not be available to eat while your group is on-site. You are welcome to dine with our families. If you do, please adjust the food supply accordingly and be mindful not to crowd our families. Some families enjoy interacting with volunteers while others enjoy eating quietly on their own.
- **Clean up:** Participants are responsible for thoroughly cleaning the kitchen as part of Meals from the Heart volunteerism. Cleaning instructions will be provided by our House staff and all volunteers are expected to stay until clean-up is complete. All dishes must be washed in a dishwasher, not hand washed.

Volunteer Expectations:

We strive to create a safe, welcoming and respectful environment for our families, staff and volunteers alike. As such, we expect volunteers to adhere to the following:

- Bring compassion and respect to your volunteerism.
- Volunteers are to follow the leadership and direction of RMHC-ENC staff at all times. Failure to comply may result in immediate dismissal and may hinder your participation in future volunteer opportunities.
- We welcome volunteers, staff and families of all backgrounds, races and religions. Please exclude any personal religious influences while on-site to ensure a welcoming space for all.
- You may take pictures of your group only and must thoroughly wash your hands upon taking pictures or using your phones. You may not take photos or videos of RMHC-ENC families.

- Volunteers are prohibited from exchanging personal information with or soliciting services to our families.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there an age requirement? The minimum age to participate is 12 years old. All children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult, and we can only accommodate a maximum of three children per group.

What is the maximum number of volunteers per group? Meal groups currently have a maximum group size of six (6) volunteers. If your group includes more than 6 volunteers, we ask that you divide your group and provide meals on different dates.

I have extra volunteers or children who want to attend, can they still come and watch without volunteering? No – everyone who comes with your group should be there to actively volunteer. Children or adults beyond the maximum group size of six volunteers are not able to attend.

Can my group get a tour of the House? Yes, please arrive early if your group would like a tour of the House before beginning to cook.

When do I need to have my groups meal planned? We ask that all groups submit their meal plan at least 1 week in advance. Remember some meals may not be great served individually. If your meal has a lot of toppings, please package toppings individually for families to grab what they'd like.

How should we individually package meals? All hot meals (needing a microwave to reheat) should be packaged in reusable containers provided by the RMH. Any cold meals (salad, fruit, etc.) should be stored in disposable containers provided by the RMH.

I volunteered and then tested positive for COVID-19. Should I let RMHC-ENC know? We ask any volunteers who test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of volunteerism to inform us immediately. This allows us to take the necessary steps for the wellbeing of anyone else who may be impacted.

How long is my group expected to be at the House? Groups should plan to volunteer for two-three hours. *Please note – groups are required to clean up after preparing the meal, so all volunteers should expect to be at the House until all clean-up is complete.*

How many people should we plan to cook for? Although our occupancy changes frequently, we ask that you plan to prepare for between 25-30 people.

What does my group need to bring? As noted above, our Houses have all of the kitchen equipment needed to prepare your meal. Your group is responsible for planning, shopping and preparing the food for the meal you are preparing. You are welcome to visit our pantry before you shop to see what items we have available for your use.

Will there be RMHC-ENC staff on-site? Yes, there will always be RMHC-ENC staff present to answer questions, get you situated in the kitchen and ensure everyone is participating in a safe manner.

Do we need to provide drinks or dessert? You are not required to bring beverages or desserts, but many groups choose to do so. Individual drinks are much appreciated by guests and desserts are always a treat! All treats must be individually packaged. The RMH has a coke machine that you are welcome to purchase drinks for the families. Coke products are \$0.50 so \$10 will provide drinks for 20 people and all proceeds are donated back to the RMH

What if my group can no longer attend on our reserved date? If your group is unable to volunteer on your reserved date, we will make every effort to reschedule your group for a future date. We understand things come up and you may not be able to make it. However, we really need to know in advance, if possible, if you are unable to make your meal date so we can look into other options of providing food for our families.

Can I make a financial contribution to the meal program instead of coming to prepare a meal? Absolutely! A \$100 donation will help feed at least 10 individuals in our Houses.

I still have questions, so who can I talk to for more information? If you have any questions about our meal program, these guidelines or your group's participation, please contact our Family Services Coordinator at caleb@rmhenc.org.