

Room at the Inn, COMO

Providing year-round care, compassion, and safe shelter for those experiencing homelessness in Columbia and Boone County.

Supplementary Volunteer Information

At Room at the Inn, we strive for every volunteer to have a positive experience. We do not ask volunteers to enforce rules and only ask that you show up with a willingness to help. Thank you for considering volunteering with Room at the Inn, our operations depend on people like you to help us complete our mission.

This document contains information that may be helpful in ensuring that your experience is a positive one.

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Volunteer Positions and Duties

Food Preparation 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM

Assist with preparing the evening meal. This includes making sandwiches, bagging cookies and chips, and preparing for our 6 PM opening. This position has limited interactions with our guests and is a great introduction to volunteering with us. Parents may bring their teenage children to help with this shift.

Serving Dinner 5:30 PM to 8 PM

Prepare and stock serving table for our 6 PM opening. Oversee serving table, keeping it stocked, serving coffee and other hot drinks, and serving soup or casseroles when available. Light cleanup after dinner is served.

Check-in 6 PM to 9 PM

Assist with guest check-in process. This includes storing guest bags and other personal items helping to maintain a secure shelter. After check-in, these volunteers help with providing guest needs including access to personal items and distribution of OTC medications.

Serving Breakfast 6 AM to 8 AM

Prepare and stock serving table for our 6:30 AM start of breakfast. Oversee serving table, keeping it stocked, and serving coffee and other hot drinks. Light cleanup after breakfast is served.

Laundry Transport

Monday and Thursday evenings between 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM. See below for detailed instructions.

Holiday Hosts

We remain open all day on New Years, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. In order to provide our guests the best possible holiday, we have an added need for volunteers.

Holiday Breakfast Hosts 6 am - 10 am (need 3 people)

Help serve breakfast, light cleanup, aid us in providing a positive atmosphere.

Holiday Lunch Hosts 10 am - 2 pm (need 3 people)

Aid us in providing a positive atmosphere, help serve lunch, light cleanup.

Holiday Supper Hosts 2 pm - 6:30 pm (need 3 people)

Aid us in providing a positive atmosphere, help serve dinner, light cleanup.

Laundry Instructions

Laundry Transport - MONDAY and THURSDAY EVENINGS between 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM, with the exception of Thanksgiving that will instead need laundry transport the following day.

STEP ONE: Arrive at the shelter between 5:30-6:30 P.M. Let the staff at the front door know you are here to get the laundry and then pull your vehicle to the side door on the east side of the building. Get the dirty laundry AND the empty blue IKEA bags and drive to the loading dock at University Hospital (directions below).

STEP TWO: Once at the loading dock, unload dirty laundry and temporarily leave outside the door of the metal building. Then enter the Hospital through the swinging doors to find the clean laundry which will be in a gray rolling bin with brown paper on top. Look out for a yellow envelope which has the invoice. Transfer the clean laundry into the blue IKEA bags. The zippered bags work best for the sheets. Take bags of clean laundry back to your vehicle.

STEP THREE: Put dirty laundry bags (as many as will fit) into the bin you have just unloaded. Then call Hospital Security at 573-882-7147. Tell them you are at the loading dock and need to be let into the room for leaving laundry. When you are let into the room, push the bin inside. If not all bags fit in this bin, put these extras into any of the other bins in the room. There are usually several. Do not leave the laundry bags on the floor.

STEP FOUR: Return to the shelter with the clean laundry. Again, let the front door know you are back and they will get someone to open the side door. Drive up to the side door and unload the clean laundry. Give the yellow envelope to the manager.

Directions to the loading dock: Hospital Drive runs east and west between College and Tiger Ave. Take it to Dean Dr. (between the west end of University Hospital and the east side of the parking garage) and turn north. Just past the Missouri Psychiatric Center on your right, turn right onto the drive to the loading dock. Take it back and bear right. You will see a tan, metal building with rust colored trim. On the far side of that building is a ramp that leads to the loading dock. Once on the loading dock, you will see the door to the metal building. The dirty laundry goes there. Across from that building are swinging doors into the hospital where you will find the carts of clean laundry. Each cart will be covered with brown paper marked Room at the Inn.

Room at the Inn Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. Respect and Dignity:

- Treat all individuals with respect, empathy, and dignity, regardless of their background, circumstances, or appearance.
- Use appropriate language and maintain a non-judgmental attitude.

2. Confidentiality:

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals at the shelter. Do not disclose personal information about them to anyone outside the shelter.

3. Punctuality and Reliability:

- Arrive on time for your scheduled volunteer shifts and fulfill your commitment to the best of your ability.
- If unable to fulfill your commitment, you can use the link in your confirmation message to cancel your shift.

5. Safety and Security:

- Sign in in the kitchen and wear a name tag with your first name on it.
- Follow all safety protocols and guidelines provided by the shelter.
- Report any safety concerns or incidents promptly to the supervisor or other staff.

6. Teamwork and Collaboration:

- Work collaboratively with other volunteers, staff, and organizations involved in the shelter's operation.
- Support and encourage a positive and inclusive team environment.

7. Cultural Sensitivity:

- Be sensitive to diverse cultural backgrounds and be inclusive of everyone's beliefs, values, and customs.

8. Compliance with Policies:

- Familiarize yourself with and adhere to all policies and procedures of the shelter.
- Seek clarification from supervisors if you have questions about any policies.

9. No Discrimination:

- Do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic.

10. Use of Resources:

- Use shelter resources responsibly and efficiently. Report any misuse or waste to the appropriate personnel.

11. Communication:

- Communicate openly and respectfully with shelter staff, fellow volunteers, and individuals in need.
- Report any concerns or incidents to the designated supervisor promptly.

12. Have fun!

Covid, Flu, RSV Protocol

During respiratory illness season, roughly November through February, guests are required to wear masks when interacting with staff and volunteers. During this period, we also ask staff and volunteers to wear masks for their own safety. If the CDC announces a period of high transmission of illness, these procedures may be extended.

Staff are tested for Covid whenever any symptoms occur and every precaution to slow the spread of illness is taken. We rarely test guests, unless serious symptoms occur, as physical restrictions and resources do not allow for quarantine or isolation. Room at the Inn urges all potential volunteers to take advantage of available vaccinations.