



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to HomeFirst

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with HomeFirst. Volunteers are a vital part of our work and mission. It takes the whole community coming together in solidarity to end homelessness for our neighbors. Your time and talent are precious, and we deeply appreciate that you are sharing them with us. We cannot do this important work without you!

Please read through the enclosed material and complete the appropriate forms. Volunteer forms are required prior to your volunteer activity and will help prepare you for volunteering at HomeFirst.

Your partnership through volunteering shows your commitment to a strong, united community and lets our unhoused neighbors know that they are seen and valued. No matter what task you are doing, you're making it possible for HomeFirst to help people find a home, improve their lives, and stay housed.

Gratefully,

Annette Pizzo

Community Engagement Manager

HomeFirst Services

HomeFirst Services

Our Mission: HomeFirst works to end homelessness by offering a full spectrum of services to help people find a home, improve their lives, and stay housed.

Our Vision: We envision a community in which everyone has a home.

HomeFirst was established in 1980 under the name of EHC Lifebuilders and changed its name in 2014 to HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County. We are relentlessly focused on helping people find and keep permanent housing and are the largest provider of emergency shelter services in Silicon Valley. Services are provided in the greater Bay Area, from Santa Clara to Sonoma Counties.

Our touchpoints include Emergency Shelters, Supportive Services, Homelessness Prevention Services, Veterans Programs and Clinical Services which encompass:

- Year-round shelters
- Cold weather programs
- Bridge Housing Communities
- Emergency Interim Housing Communities
- Outreach to camps
- Family Living Centers
- Transitional Housing

We serve almost 5,000 individuals annually across our programs and serve more than 500,000 meals each year.

Accreditation and Affiliation:

HomeFirst Services is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation registered as tax-exempt with the Internal Revenue Service (Tax ID: 94-2684272). Our Veterans' Programs proudly boast a CARF Accreditation (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), meeting rigorous standards for quality and service.

For more information about HomeFirst and how you can join the fight against homelessness, visit our website: www.homefirstsc.org

Volunteer Program Key Information

Volunteers are defined by HomeFirst as anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction and on behalf of the agency.

Mandatory Service Volunteers

HomeFirst accepts volunteers participating in student community service activities, student intern projects, alternative sentencing or diversion programs, corporate volunteer programs, and other volunteer referral programs. In each of these cases, a written agreement stating responsibility for management and care of volunteers, any details or expected outcomes of the volunteer service, and a timeline for the project proposal may be required prior to volunteer service being scheduled. Each community service or student project will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Service at the Discretion of the Agency

HomeFirst accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the agency. Volunteers agree that HomeFirst Services may at any time, for any reason decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the agency.

The volunteer may, at any time or for any reason, decide to sever relationship with HomeFirst Services. Notice of such a decision should be communicated to the Community Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Vaccination Status and Health Protocols

HomeFirst requires **all** volunteers performing work at our sites to be fully vaccinated, including booster, against COVID-19. Volunteers with medical or religious exemptions must provide proof of a negative PCR test within 72 hours of scheduled service. Volunteers must provide proof of vaccination prior to volunteering.

Any volunteers experiencing symptoms including but not limited to fever, dry cough, or difficulty breathing prior to their scheduled volunteer shift must contact

the Community Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible to cancel the shift. Any volunteer who exhibits symptoms while volunteering will be sent home. Volunteers who receive a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 within 5 days after volunteering should notify the Community Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible.

Volunteers are required to wear a face mask while volunteering at any congregate living sites. Gloves must be worn while working with food.

Volunteers who work more than 8 hours total must have a current negative TB test on file.

Check-in and Time Sheets

Upon arrival for a shift, volunteers must sign in using a sign-in kiosk or mobile Cervis app. Volunteers must also sign out at the end of their shift. Accurate completion of a time sheet is vital for HomeFirst's record keeping as well as enabling us to offer volunteers a summary of hours worked for any needed reporting. Any questions regarding hours worked should be directed to the Community Engagement Coordinator.

Policies and Practices

Hours for Community Engagement Office and Volunteer Shifts

Our Community Engagement Department is open Monday through Friday from 9am-5pm. Your volunteer activity may fall outside this timeframe. HomeFirst has designated volunteer shifts for each department, volunteer opportunities with special events, and classes on nights and weekends. Each volunteer schedules their shifts with a Community Engagement Coordinator. Volunteers are to begin service at the designated shift time and alert the Community Engagement Coordinator if they will be late or cannot fulfill their shift.

Equal Opportunity

It is the policy of HomeFirst Services not to discriminate against any volunteer or volunteer applicant because of age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.

Harassment Policy

HomeFirst prohibits any form of unlawful harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status in accordance with applicable laws. With respect to sexual harassment, HomeFirst strives to foster a work environment free of unlawful sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome and/or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Any volunteer who believes they have been harassed should immediately notify the supervisor and Community Engagement staff. All complaints and related information will be investigated and kept confidential to the fullest extent possible.

Drug-Free Environment

HomeFirst Services strictly prohibits the use, sale, dispensing, possession, or manufacture of illegal drugs in the workplace or while engaged in HomeFirst activities.

Smoking

HomeFirst is a non-smoking facility and participates in federal programs. Per the United States Health Department, smokers must be 25' away from the entrance to buildings while smoking.

Safety and Accident Rules

HomeFirst provides a clean, hazard free, healthy, safe environment in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. As a volunteer you should observe all posted safety rules, adhere to all safety instructions provided by your supervisor and use safety equipment where required. Your workspace should be kept neat, clean, and orderly.

HIPAA Privacy Rule

The HIPAA Privacy Rule establishes national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other individually identifiable health information (collectively defined as "protected health information"). The Rule requires appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy of protected health information and sets limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information without an individual's authorization. Volunteers will keep protected health information confidential as directed by HomeFirst staff members.

Weapons

It is the Policy of HomeFirst that no unauthorized firearms or weapons are permitted on/in HomeFirst property. This includes but is not limited to disabling gas dispensers (and similar disabling devices), guns, starting pistols, flare pistols, and pocket or hunting knives with a blade exceeding three (3) inches in length, and other objects that are intended for use as a weapon.

Attire

Based on the assigned tasks, your supervisor will identify appropriate attire. Study, closed toe shoes and shirts with sleeves (long or short) are required for food/kitchen service work. Face masks are required when working at congregate living facilities.

Name Badge

Volunteers must wear a name badge at all times when volunteering at HomeFirst.

Volunteer Orientation

Individual volunteers must complete Volunteer Orientation prior to scheduling shifts. Volunteer Groups will receive an orientation when arriving for their volunteer shift from a Community Engagement Coordinator.

Volunteers will be informed of HomeFirst values and best practices, safety guidelines and expectations for the work they will complete during their volunteer shift.

Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties as scheduled. When a volunteer expects to be absent from a scheduled day, the volunteer should contact the Community Engagement Coordinator as soon as far in advance as possible. Meal providers must make any changes to their meal service schedule 3 days prior to the scheduled date of service.

Review, Evaluation, and Termination of Volunteer Service

Volunteers are encouraged to tell their Community Engagement Coordinator of any issues concerning volunteer matters.

If at any time a volunteer or HomeFirst is in conflict over a volunteer position, staff or volunteer behavior, and/or general problem, HomeFirst has the authority to request written complaints from all parties, discuss termination of volunteer activity, move the volunteer to a new position, or request the volunteer discontinue volunteering.

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of HomeFirst, or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment, may be subject to dismissal. Possible grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, theft of property including food or other donated items, misuse of organization equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of guests, participants, or coworkers, failure to abide by organization policies and procedures, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Records

Every volunteer is entered into the HomeFirst volunteer database to record each activity and the number of hours. Please notify the Community Engagement Coordinator with any change of contact information. If you would like a copy of your volunteer record you may request this 3 business days in advance of the need.

TB Tests

Volunteers who work more than 8 hours annually in certain departments must show proof of a negative tuberculosis test.

Food Handlers Permit

Volunteers who elect to provide a meal as their volunteer activity must verify at least one person in their group has an active food handlers permit and be preparing meals in a licensed, government-agency inspected kitchen. Meals may also be catered from a local restaurant.

Media

If any media outlet contacts a volunteer regarding information or an interview about HomeFirst, the volunteer should refer them to the Community Engagement Coordinator or Management Staff. If a media representative approaches a volunteer while on HomeFirst property or at an Agency event, the volunteer should refrain from answering questions or sharing opinions and alert the Community Engagement Coordinator.

Childcare

Children may not accompany volunteers during volunteer service. HomeFirst requires that children be a minimum of 13 years old to volunteer in a select few of our sites. Some of our sites are restricted to adult (18 years and older) volunteers. Minors 13 to 16 years old must have one adult chaperone for every five children in this age group. Minors 16-17 years old must have one chaperone for every seven minors.

First Aid and Emergency Procedures

First Aid Kits are located in each of HomeFirst's sites. Volunteers should have site management help them locate the First Aid Kit prior to their first volunteer activity. In the event of an accident or injury, notify a staff member immediately. Call 911 for an emergency.

Parking

Free parking is available in the parking lot and streets along most of HomeFirst sites.

Youth Volunteers

Youth must be a minimum of 13 years old to volunteer at HomeFirst locations, with a chaperone. The ratio of adult chaperones to minors is one adult (21 or older) for every five minors 13-15 years old. For minors 16-17 years old, the ratio required is one adult for every seven minors. HomeFirst must receive a signed volunteer application and volunteer agreement for each chaperone and minor volunteer prior to the assigned volunteer date.

HomeFirst is a critical essential service and those we serve are often the most vulnerable in our community. We approach our program participants with dignity and respect and must ensure that even our youngest volunteers uphold our values and practices, therefore we ask that chaperones fill the following role:

- Ensure that your youth are committed to supporting a volunteer project
- Ensure that your team stays on task and focused on the project assignment
- Ensure that your team follows all safety rules, policies and practices as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.

If a youth group requires service verification letters, the group leader will provide a list of names to the Community Engagement Coordinator prior to the service date.

Thank You!

Volunteers are vital to HomeFirst. Your service helps us efficiently care for nearly 5,000 people each year. We want each volunteer to take away a special memory, gain new knowledge about our unhoused neighbors, and know that they made a difference in our community.

HomeFirst Code of Conduct Agreement

As a HomeFirst volunteer, I will:

- Represent HomeFirst with professionalism, dignity, and pride and conduct myself with courtesy and appropriate behavior.
- Display respect and courtesy for HomeFirst employees, other volunteers, program participants, and property.
- Respect the privacy of persons served by HomeFirst and hold in confidence sensitive, private, and personal information. All work at HomeFirst is confidential.
- Be dependable and responsible. Notify staff as soon as possible if unable to report for an assigned shift or complete an assigned task.
- Follow through and complete accepted tasks, dress in attire that follows the volunteer dress code, and be prepared for my shift.
- Report any emergencies, hazardous, or unsafe condition to an appropriate staff member.
- Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of this organization.

As a HomeFirst volunteer, I will not:

- Share or accept personal information, telephone numbers, addresses, social media accounts with HomeFirst program participants and clients.
- Use or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco products, or illegal substances while in HomeFirst buildings or involved with any HomeFirst event.
- Use vulgar or inappropriate language. No sexual contact, sexually suggestive behavior or speech or any form of sexual harrasment will be tolerated.
- Lend or give money or donations of any kind directly to program participants. Please direct donations to our administrative office.
- Accept gifts or gratuities from HomeFirst program participants or visitors.
- Transport HomeFirst program participants or clients in personal vehicles.
- Try to assist a program participant or client who may be sick or has had an accident.

Volunteer Name (print) _____

Volunteer Signature _____

Date: _____