



Ronald McDonald House®
Eastern North Carolina

Keeping families close®

Meal Group Guidelines

*We have increased our Meal Group policies and guidelines in the wake of COVID-19. These parameters prioritize the safety of our families, volunteers and staff alike, so all groups must abide by these rules in order to participate. **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 two (2) volunteers.** Everyone who comes with your group will count toward this total and must be there to actively participate.
- **Meal Group Volunteers must be at least 18 years old.** As an increased precaution at this time, children are not currently able to participate.
- **All volunteers must be completely illness/symptom free (cold, flue, fever, stomach virus, etc.) for at least 14 days prior to volunteering.**
- **Participants will complete a health questionnaire and temperature reading upon arrive at the RMH.** We also ask volunteers who test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of any volunteerism to let us know as soon as possible.
- **Volunteers must wear facemasks and gloves.** Participants must bring masks and RMHENC will provide gloves upon arrival. Additional masks are available if necessary. Additional health practices during participation will include frequent hand washing and changing gloves, and no face, hair or phone touching.
- **Volunteers should consider personal health risks and limitations prior to volunteering.** The [CDC defines higher risk individuals](#) as older adults (65+), and people with serious, chronic medical conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, etc.).

Program Guidelines:

- **Dinner should be ready for families between 5:00-5:30.** You may arrive as early as needed to ensure dinner is ready between that time.
- **Prepare to be here for a minimum of 2-3 hours** (cooking, individually packaging and cleaning). Your designated volunteer time is 4:00-7:00pm.
- **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, volunteers will pack all prepared food into individually sized containers for families to enjoy either during or after the mealtime.
- **Social Distancing:** We require all group members to be mindful of spacing between one another while participating, and to maintain a six-foot distance from others at all times.
- **On-Site Dining:** The RMH dining room will have limited seating capacity, ensuring our families are able to practice safe social distancing while eating. Additionally, some families may choose to eat in their rooms depending on seating availability and their comfort level. RMHENC families often have inconsistent schedules due to patient treatments and may not be available to eat while your group is on-site.

For safety reasons volunteers are not currently able to dine at the House.

- **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.

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

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there an age requirement? To ensure the health and safety of all volunteers, families and staff, as well as the food safety of the meals being prepared for our families, all Culinary Hearts volunteers must be at least 18 years old.

What is the maximum number of volunteers per group? Meal groups currently have a maximum group size of two (2) volunteers. Following COVID-19 we are limiting the group size to reduce the number of people in and out of our Houses. If your group includes more than 2 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 two volunteers are not able to attend.

Can my group get a tour of the House? In an effort to reduce the number of visitors moving through the House, we will not be able to offer your group a tour at this time.

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.

What is the health questionnaire that I will need to answer before each shift? Review the below checklist to identify whether or not you are eligible and comfortable to return to volunteering with RMHENC. Checking all boxes means you meet all current volunteer requirements and we encourage you to review this list before each volunteer shift.

- I am willing to volunteer alone on a shift.
- I have not traveled to a high-risk COVID area within 14 days.
- I have not tested positive for COVID in the last 14 days.
- I have, will bring and will wear a facemask at all times while inside the RMHENC.
- I am willing to complete a health questionnaire and temperature reading each time I arrive at RMHENC.
- I have read and understand the CDC's qualifications of and recommendations for high-risk individuals and feel comfortable volunteering at this time.

I have an illness or symptoms that aren't associated with COVID-19, so can I volunteer? We require all volunteers to be entirely illness and symptom free for at least 14 days before volunteering. We will not allow volunteers with an illness or symptoms of any kind to participate at this time.

I volunteered and then tested positive for COVID-19. Should I let RMHENC 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 15-20 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 RMHENC staff on-site? Yes, there will always be RMHENC 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 Director of Marketing and Volunteer Services at katie@rmhenc.org.