

Warming Center intake volunteer instructions:

You will need to arrive at 6:30 p.m. at the warming center, 413 3rd Street in La Crosse. Park on the street past the warming center on the left. While it is very important that you are there and ready to begin at 6:30, please don't come much earlier as the staff will likely not be ready. Come to the kitchen door (facing 3rd St. on the right) and knock.

Someone will let you in.

When all the volunteers have arrived, the roles and duties for the evening are assigned. 6:30 to 7:00 is our prep time so that we can allow guests to begin entering the center at 7:00 p.m.

Setup checklist:

Front desk: Two volunteers

Intake sheet, bed layout diagram, pencils, dry erase marker.

Tote room: Two volunteers

Toiletries sheet, pencils, room is neat and orderly. Make sure there is one clean towel in each bin. Do a quick visual inventory of the toiletries in the cabinet that the guests might need.

Kitchen: Two or three volunteers

Verify that there is enough food for 40 people. Start heating food if needed or keep it warm in the oven. Make a large pot of coffee. Wash dishes if needed. Stack food trays, utensils, cups etc. on the counter. Have the food ready to serve at 7:00.

All: Make sure restrooms have toilet paper and paper towels and soap. Showers should have shampoo and body wash. Trash cans should have plastic liners and be empty.

Volunteer duties:

Front Desk, two volunteers. You will have an intake list which has all of this year's previous guests in alphabetical order by first name. You will also have a bed signup sheet as well as a laminated sheet showing the bed layout.

Volunteer #1: As a guest walks up, ask for their name and then find that name on the intake list. You will be checking off names on the intake list and reading off first and last name for the other front desk volunteer. If the name is not listed, write their name at the end of the list.

Volunteer #2 asks which bed the guest wants, referring to the laminated sheet. Cross out the bed numbers on the laminated sheet using a dry erase marker. If it is a new guest just pick a bed for them. Ask each guest if they want a shower or want to do laundry. If so, write their name on the Shower/ Laundry sign-up sheet. If the guest wants a shower, tell them to drop their belongings in the Tote Room and then come back to get a towel when they are ready to shower.

Tote Room, two volunteers: Inside each tote box is a blanket and a tag with the tote

number on it. When a guest walks up, ask for their bed number (given at the front desk). The guest's bed number is their tote number. If the person has a coat to hang up or an extra bag, put the tag on the item. Once the guest has placed their belongings into the tote box and handed off any extra bag or coat, give them their blanket and tell them to proceed to the bed area.

Place the tote box back on the shelf in the same numerical order. Don't overstuff the tote boxes.

Do not let the guest walk away until every item they are dropping off is in a tote box or is identified with a tote/ bed number.

The guests will drop off their belongings for the night and retrieve their belongings in the morning. The tote room is a secure area. Never let a guest into the tote room, and never walk away from the tote room unless the door is locked. Every item a guest drops off in the tote room must be able to fit in a tote box or be labeled and hung up or labeled as an extra bag. Another group of volunteers gives out the belongings in the morning, so it is vital that there are no unlabeled items. If they request a second blanket, check with a staff member or the lead volunteer. Sometimes we have extra, usually we don't.

Kitchen, two or three volunteers: When you arrive at 6:30 there are several things that need to be done to prepare for guest arrival at 7:00 p.m. Verify there is enough food for 40 people. If not, or if you are not sure, tell the staff person immediately so something can be ordered. Start heating food if needed or keep it warm in the oven. Make a large pot of coffee and fill the carafe. Wash dishes as needed. Stack plates, utensils, cups etc. on the counter. Have the food ready to serve at 7:00.

Serve each guest a good portion of food. Let them know that they can come back for seconds if they are still hungry. There should be options available if you run low such as peanut butter sandwiches, fresh fruit etc.

As the guests finish eating dinner, they should be putting any dirty dishes in the grey bin (or if paper goods in the trash). By the end of the evening the dishes should all be washed and put away in the cupboards, all leftover food in the refrigerator with a label and a date. Also, wipe and sanitize the tables and chairs. The trash goes into the dumpster in the alley.

End of shift:

By 9:30 p.m. the night shift should have arrived, and the intake volunteers are free to leave after verifying with the staff. Please make sure that there are no messes left for others to clean up.

Thank you!