

# Volunteer Overview



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713-630-5639

Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for expressing interest in volunteering with Covenant House Texas (CHT)! Our programs, administrative services and special events rely on capable and energetic volunteers, who are passionate about serving our youth. As you may know, the faith-based mission of Covenant House Texas is to provide service, shelter and comprehensive support to homeless youth ages 18-24, offered with absolute respect and unconditional love. Volunteers are essential to our success, and I am grateful that you are interested in helping to further our mission.

To ensure the volunteer experience at Covenant House Texas is a fulfilling one for you, even as we ensure the utmost safety and protection for our residents, the following onboarding process has been developed for our volunteers:

1. Please read the enclosed information about Covenant House Texas and the volunteer opportunities available, then complete the Volunteer Application located on the Get Involved tab of our website, [www.covenanhousetx.org](http://www.covenanhousetx.org). A hard copy version can be provided upon request.
2. Upon review of your application, you will be contacted to set up an interview with a staff member. The CHT volunteer interview process allows you to talk more about your interests in order to identify a match with our program. This interview will be a time for us to mutually learn more about each other, and for you to ask any questions or address any concerns you may have. While we are always in need of excellent volunteers, we want to ensure it will be a mutually satisfying experience.
3. As required for all CHT employees, reference calls and background checks will be completed to ensure the utmost safety and well-being of our youth.
4. Volunteers who serve on our campus and/or interact with our youth are required to have an annual tuberculosis skin test. Following a successful interview and background check, you can receive a tuberculosis test free of charge in our medical clinic, or you can provide proof that you have had a negative test in the past 12 months.
5. Once we receive the results of your tuberculosis test, you will be referred to your program of interest to meet with the supervisor and determine a schedule.
6. Volunteers must check in at the security office upon arrival, and alert the security staff of your departure. A volunteer badge must be worn at all times while on campus. Additionally, we ask that you document your service hours in our volunteer system at the conclusion of each visit.
7. As the COVID-19 pandemic and other illnesses continue to impact congregate living facilities, we encourage volunteers to be masked while on campus.
8. Currently, up to ten volunteers may be on campus at one time, for a period of up to four hours per visit. Some exceptions may be made by CHT leadership.

Thanks again for your interest in volunteering with Covenant House Texas. I look forward to receiving your application. In the meantime, please contact us if you have any questions. You can also learn more about us on our website at [www.covenanhousetx.org](http://www.covenanhousetx.org).

In gratitude for your service,

Felicia Broussard  
Chief Development Officer  
713-630-5670  
[fbroussard@covenanthouse.org](mailto:fbroussard@covenanthouse.org)

## COVENANT HOUSE TEXAS OVERVIEW

### Our Mission & History

Covenant House Texas is a faith-based organization committed to giving homeless youth a safe haven, absolute respect, unconditional love, and a path to lasting independence. In partnership with the community, we are the voice for homeless youth.

Covenant House was founded in 1972 in response to the growing problem of kids living unprotected on the harsh streets of New York City. Since then, the organization has become the largest private shelter and social justice organization for homeless youth, with 31 locations spanning North and Central America.

Covenant House Texas (CHT) opened its doors in 1983 to provide shelter for homeless, abused and abandoned youth ages 18 – 24. With nearly 40 years of service, CHT continues to offer an extensive continuum of care, using a trauma-informed, evidence-based approach that includes physical and mental health care, substance abuse counseling, educational and vocational training, transitional and permanent living programs, street outreach and prevention, faith-based opportunities, and life skills classes. These comprehensive services ensure that youth are progressing towards wellness and permanent stability, as they receive all of the basic necessities of food, clothing, and safe shelter. As the only organization in the Greater Houston area with comprehensive programs specifically designed to meet the needs of homeless youth ages 18 to 24, CHT serves over 5,000 homeless and at-risk youth annually, giving them resources and support to help them achieve their full potential.

### Our Youth & Services

The majority of young adults who arrive at Covenant House Texas (CHT) have previously resided in economically disadvantaged homes, experienced hunger and instability from a young age, and endured trauma as victims of trafficking, exploitation, violence, and abuse.

We fulfill our covenant with each youth by responding to their immediate and long-term needs as we welcome every young person and assist them in achieving their personal goals. In return, each young person expected to work towards those goals by following an individualized service plan developed in conjunction with their case manager.

Covenant House Texas offers a complete continuum of services beginning with our medical clinic, which is open to any homeless youth, resident or not. Through a 30+-year partnership with Baylor College of Medicine, our clients receive physical and mental health care from a staff of nurses, physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists. Our Career and Education Program encourages youth to resume/complete their education in HISD, GED classes, or by enrolling in higher education. Likewise, youth receive vocational guidance, including job skill assessment, placement support, and résumé and interview preparation. Youth also participate in regular life skills workshops that focus on a variety of topics including personal finances, nutrition, healthy communication and lifestyle choices, hygiene, and more. Our Young Parents Program offers youth with children under the age of six, the opportunity to live and grow together through parenting classes and assistance with daycare placement. Residents can also find strength and healing through worship and Bible study opportunities offered on campus and through area churches.

### Core Residential Programs

- **Youth Engagement Center:** This serves as a drop-in and intake center where youth can have a meal, take a shower, or access other services during the day. Each night, up to 20 youth sleep on bedrolls while waiting for a bed to become available in the shelter.
- **Safe Haven Emergency Shelter:** The shelter provides emergency housing, basic needs, case management, and support to 40 homeless youth every day and is above capacity every night.
- **Young Parents Program:** Pregnant and parenting youth receive shelter with their children, ages 0-6 years, while receiving family-specific services.

- **Rights of Passage Transitional Housing:** One of Houston's most successful transitional living programs, the 18-month program equips youth with the skills required to achieve success in independent housing.
- **Rapid Rehousing:** CHT provides resources to quickly move eligible young adults into affordable housing, thereby minimizing the length of time youth are homeless.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Life Skills Workshops

We work with youth ages 18 to 24 to give them tools to accomplish independent living successfully. Volunteer opportunities include teaching workshops on topics such as money management, nutrition and meal preparation, healthy relationships, good decision-making, voter registration, vision boards, hygiene and personal care, etc. These interactive workshops can be offered on a one-time, weekly series, or monthly basis. Topics should be discussed/approved by CHT staff in advance and should be relevant to our youth demographic.

### Street Outreach

A Covenant House Texas Street Outreach van travels the streets of Houston at night to distribute food, water, toiletries, blankets, etc. to the homeless community, offering information about services provided by Covenant House Texas for 18 to 24-year old youth. Volunteers may join the Covenant House Texas staff and youth volunteers during these community outings\*. (This opportunity is subject to current pandemic restrictions.)

### Group Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities exist for groups of up to ten\* persons to volunteer at Covenant House Texas. Examples include providing/serving a catered lunch or dinner to all residents (*Catering to Youth*), coordinating leisure activities, assisting with tutorial and/or educational support, offering on/off-site recreational or cultural events, and preparing special holiday experiences and décor. (\*This number has been reduced temporarily due to pandemic precautions.)

### Mentorships

Our Rights of Passage youth are preparing for their next steps as independent young adults. Interested mentors may be matched with Rights of Passage residents based on their desired profession, faith, or other personal interests. Volunteers that are at least 27 years of age can serve as mentors to our youth, providing friendship, advice, and support as a positive role model.

### Faith-based Ministry

Volunteers may support Covenant House Texas through the facilitation of spiritual growth opportunities for youth. The policies of Covenant House Texas have always been based in Biblical principles and the Christian faith. Though the original site in New York City was founded by a Franciscan Priest, Covenant House Texas is not affiliated with any particular denomination. Covenant House Texas upholds its commitment to serving as Christ did – with unconditional love and absolute respect. While it is our desire that young people develop holistically – including spiritually – while in our care, youth are not coerced or required to conform to any belief or practice in order to receive services.

### Administrative Needs

Volunteer opportunities for clerical and administrative support are available. They include answering the Covenant House Texas telephones, writing thank you notes to supporters, assisting with general mail-outs and filing, and organizing our Clothing Closet and in-kind donations. Opportunities to assist with our Christmas Wishes program are also available.

### Career and Education Support

Academic and GED tutors are needed in the evenings to assist youth who are working towards their diploma, degree or certificate. Other opportunities include helping with job searches, interviewing skills, résumé composition, and college application/financial aid advisement.

### Special Events

Every year, Covenant House Texas hosts four special events to support our annual budget and connect the community with our mission. These include Sleep Out: Executive Edition, Sleep Out: Young Professionals Edition, Night of Broadway Stars, and Guts + Glory Corporate Obstacle Challenge.

Each of these special events require a host of volunteers who assist with day-of-event implementation. Volunteers are essential for set up, registration, greeting/seating guests, auction, raffle, obstacle course regulation, breakdown, and much more!

A committee for each event, comprised of CHT Board Members and community members, meets to strategize and plan these major fundraisers. To learn more about our four major events and how you can serve on one of the committees or at the actual events, please contact Chief Development Officer Felicia Broussard ([fbroussard@covenanthouse.org](mailto:fbroussard@covenanthouse.org)).

## COVENANT HOUSE TEXAS AFFILIATE GROUPS

### Guild of Volunteers

Our Guild of Volunteers have supported Covenant House Texas for over 35 years through the organization and implementation of a variety of activities for our youth. From beach trips, zoo and museum visits, sporting events and restaurant outings, to monthly birthday parties and annual graduation celebrations, this committed group of volunteers have bonded together to support our youth and programs in many ways. This body of advocates has also assisted in meeting our operating budget by hosting an annual luncheon and providing clothing, toiletries, housing necessities, and holiday gifts for our youth.

You can learn more about the Guild by contacting Chief Development Officer Felicia Broussard ([fbroussard@covenanthouse.org](mailto:fbroussard@covenanthouse.org)).

### Young Professionals Associate Board

The mission of the Covenant House Texas Young Professional Associate Board (YP) is to socialize with like-minded professionals, generate funds for Covenant House Texas, and engage in service to benefit the lives of homeless youth in Texas. The CHT Young Professionals host fundraising events including, Sleep Out: YP Edition, an annual Kickball Tournament, trivia nights and more! YPs also volunteer at Covenant House Texas throughout the year.

If you would like more information on how to become involved with CHT Young Professionals, please contact Associate Board President Kristy Banda ([KBanda@texasadvocates.com](mailto:KBanda@texasadvocates.com)).

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS:** Contact Fundraising Manager Thomas Wiuff at [twiuff@covenanthouse.org](mailto:twiuff@covenanthouse.org) or 713-630-5639.

**NOTE:** Covenant House Texas requires all of its volunteers to be a minimum of **25 years of age or older**, depending on their placement. All prospective volunteers are screened, selected and placed according to Covenant House Texas needs and volunteer qualifications.