



**Covenant
House**
Texas



Volunteer Welcome Packet



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Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer and serve at Covenant House Texas. 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 we are grateful that you are interested in helping to further our mission. **You most assuredly make a difference!**

Please read through the following, which will give you information about Covenant House Texas and other important facts.

Should you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact us.



About Covenant House Texas

Covenant House was founded in 1972 in response to the growing problem of youth living unprotected on the harsh streets of New York City. Since then, the organization has become the largest private shelter for homeless youth, with 21 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. After more than 40 years of service, CHT is still one of the only service providers in Texas of its type, offering an extensive continuum of care to the homeless youth population in Houston/Harris County and surrounding areas.

The mission of Covenant House Texas is to offer homeless and runaway youth a safe haven from the



dangers of street life and abuse as well as provide them with the necessary skills, training, and emotional support to choose positive life alternatives and develop into self-sufficient adults.

CHT carries out this mission by offering an array of services including walk-in services, a crisis shelter, free medical care, comprehensive case management, mental health and substance abuse counseling, educational and vocational training, life skills training, a transitional living program, a permanent housing program, spiritual guidance and counseling, street outreach services, a runaway prevention program, and an aftercare program.

Covenant House Texas can be your LIFELINE

Located at: 1111 Lovett Blvd., Houston, TX 77006

713-523-2231

After 3PM Call: 713-630-5601

Intake hours: 3:00PM – 10:00PM



Our Youth and 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:**
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 18month 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 to give them tools to accomplish independent living successfully. Volunteer opportunities include facilitating 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 CHT.

❖ **Group Volunteer Opportunities:**

Opportunities exist for groups to volunteer at CHT. 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.

❖ **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 25 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 CHT 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.

❖ **Administrative Needs:**

Our 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 25 years of age can serve as mentors to our youth, providing friendship, advice, and support as a positive role model.

❖ **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.



❖ **Special Events:**

Every year, CHT 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.

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.



Volunteers

❖ **Young Professionals Associated 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. 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.



Career Panel



Kickball Tournament



Onboarding Process

Please keep in mind that the CHT volunteer screening process can take an average of three weeks to complete, from start of application to placement. May also depend on assignment to determine all pre-requisites steps:

- ❖ Online volunteer application
- ❖ Phone interview
- ❖ Reference Check (3)
- ❖ TB Test
- ❖ Child and Youth Protection Policy online course
- ❖ Background Check
- ❖ Orientation Session
 - Liability Waiver
 - Harassment and Nondiscrimination
 - Campus Tour
 - Online Volunteer Application

Volunteer Policies and Responsibilities

Respectful Behavior

As a member of the CHT team, you are a representative of CHT's brand and image and are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. You must be respectful and courteous in your interaction with our residents, staff, and other volunteers. Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior, sexual harassment, threats, disparaging remarks, discrimination, or vulgar language will not be tolerated and you will be ceasing your volunteer work as a result of such conduct. Bottom line – commit to providing excellent customer service to our residents, staff, visitors, and fellow volunteers.

Privacy Policy and Conveying Correct Information

Information pertaining to any of our residents and/or their specific cases is strictly confidential and may not be discussed with others. Please refrain from offering public information on programs and policies unless you are sure you have the current, accurate information. When in doubt, always refer questions to CHT staff. Only CHT approved signage and messaging are allowed on the campus. Do not write notes, post paper signs, or affix any other signs or messages without prior approval from CHT management.

Dress Code

Your dress code can vary, depending on your volunteer assignment. In general, clothing that is excessively tight, revealing, short, or with visual, written, or implied messages or logos that are likely to disrupt the work environment are not allowed.

- ❖ CHT Volunteer Badges: This will be assigned to you once you have completed volunteer orientation and arrive for your first shift. They are to be worn at all times with on the CHT campus.



- ❖ CHT Volunteer Vests/T-shirts: This will be assigned to you once you have completed volunteer orientation and arrive for your first shift. They are to be worn at all times on the CHT campus.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all buildings and on facility grounds.

Drugs and Alcohol

Under no circumstances shall a volunteer work at our facility under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If suspected of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, you will be asked to leave immediately and will be subject to termination from the CHT Volunteer program.

Backpacks, Purses, and other personal items

For your peace of mind, we highly recommended that you leave your backpack and/or purse in your home or vehicle while you volunteer at CHT. We do not provide locker space for your belongings. All backpacks and purses are subject to inspection upon arrival.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

It is prohibited to bring firearms, knives, or any weapon onto the premises of CHT.

Injury

Please be sure to mind all signs and safety precautions. If you are injured while at CHT, you must notify the Volunteer Services Coordinator and/or shift supervisor immediately.

Complaints

Your point of contact regarding volunteering or CHT activities is the Volunteer Services Coordinator. If you have a complaint or difficulty working with a staff member or other volunteer, please bring it to the attention of the Volunteer Services Coordinator so it can be resolved. Immediately report anything you interpret as harassment to the Volunteer Services Coordinator or shift supervisor to ensure your safety and the safety of everyone on the premise.

Our Commitment to you

By being a part of the Covenant House Texas team, you will

- ❖ Be treated as a respected member of our team, not just free help
- ❖ Be given appropriate training to enable you to meet your responsibilities at CHT responsibilities with confidence
- ❖ Be assigned to a team that takes into consideration your personal preferences, life experiences, education, vocational background, and offers an opportunity for continued growth and development
- ❖ Be given guidance, direction, and support throughout your volunteering journey at CHT
- ❖ Be engaged in meaningful work and be actively included regardless of any physical limitation
- ❖ Be given regular feedback on your duties
- ❖ Be recognized for your efforts and dedication

We couldn't do it without you!