



2024 Volunteer Handbook

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Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County is a local united Christian organization and ministry dedicated to providing love, hope, respect and a new beginning for the homeless.

Disclaimer

This publication is designed to provide information only in regard to the subject matter covered. Its purpose is to clearly outline the program delivery and expectations of Volunteers in the most commonly experienced circumstances. Readers will be responsible for obtaining independent advice before acting on any information contained in or in connection with this manual. The manual is to be read by all new Volunteers and referred to whenever questions arise.



Pathway to Success Program Overview

Section 1. Organizational Background

A relief effort began in 1888 to coordinate the outreach of churches in Fort Worth to aid the poor and dispossessed has continued, without interruption, for over 136 years. Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County served as an auxiliary to local churches to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the “rabble of the city and the outcasts in the slum districts.” Bethel Mission became what is known today as Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County. Since the earliest days, preaching the Gospel has been the focus of the Mission. From the early 1900’s through World War I, the demand for the services provided by UGM-TC grew dramatically. Fort Worth’s population had grown faster than the city could support. People requested food, clothing, shelter, guidance, and UGM-TC freely ministered to those in need.

For 90 years, the Mission was in downtown Fort Worth. But, remaining there no longer became practical because of the age of the buildings and the vision of city leadership. In 1979, the Mission moved from the business district to a new campus at 1331 E. Lancaster Avenue, the current location of the Neeley Building. As the century ended, the Mission expansion continued. In 1993, we added on to our Women’s Center and in late 2002, the Board of Directors completed a successful capital campaign and opened the John & Jo Cox Facility, with housing for families experiencing homelessness, an expanded dining hall and kitchen, a chapel, an educational multi-purpose room and administrative offices.

In 2016, UGM-TC opened our Scott Walker Women and Families Building. The building provides shelter for single women and men with children, as well as dual-parent families. This is UGM-TC’s first overnight shelter for women as well. The Scott Walker Building has program rooms and a computer room, hair salon, The Suzie Murray Chapel, a large courtyard for Residents and much more.

UGM-TC is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. The greatest amount of funding comes from individual donors and a few foundation grants. UGM-TC does not take any federal, state or county funds for programs.

Section 2. Snapshot of Homelessness

Homelessness occurs when people or households are unable to acquire and/or maintain housing they can afford.

Typically, persons become homeless because of some unforeseen financial crisis such as a medical emergency, a car accident or a death in the family, something directly relating to them being unable to hold on to housing.

While circumstances can vary, the main reason people experience homelessness is because they cannot find housing they can afford. It is the scarcity of affordable

housing and the prevalence of poverty in the United States, which is behind their inability to acquire or maintain housing.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness for their program into four categories. The categories are:

- individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (includes a subset for an individual who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided);
- individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
- unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; and
- individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.

Statistics

Alliance to End Homelessness National Report:

- In January 2022, 582,462 people were homeless on a given night in the United States. This represents a rate of approximately 18 people experiencing homelessness per every 10,000 people in the general population.
- Of that number, 163,089 were people in families
- 419,373 were individuals.
- On that same night, there were 29,123 unaccompanied homeless youth, five percent of the total homeless population.
- On that same night, 34,948 Veterans were homeless.

Tarrant County Homeless Coalition report 2023:

- In January 2023, 2,723 people were homeless on the “point-in-time” count including both Tarrant County and Parker County
- 62% men
- 38% women
- 18% under the age of 18
- 8% Veterans
- 9% Families

Section 3. Those are the numbers; who are the People?

People tend to assume that someone who is experiencing homelessness is lazy; they do not have a job, they are drug addicts, or they are “crazy,” and they cannot be helped! There is a prevalent assumption in our society that homelessness is caused by an individual’s inability to make the right choices in their life, after all,

you and your friends have been able to survive just fine through hard work and perseverance, right?

But the truth is there are many factors that lead to homelessness such as having a mental/physical disability, being kicked out for being LGBTQ, running away from an abusive husband/family, financial crisis, addiction/substance dependence and the plain fact that housing, food, and healthcare in the United States are extremely expensive. Where can a person who is on a low fixed income from Social Security Insurance or who is employed only making minimum wage go to find affordable housing?

No one chooses to be homeless! Homelessness can happen to anyone. We do not serve "homeless people"; we serve people: people who are experiencing homelessness. People whose temporary home is UGM-TC.

Section 4. UGM-TC Population

UGM-TC has the following accommodations for people experiencing homelessness:

Residential Program

Single men	140 beds (dorm beds and rooms for 4)
Single women	58 beds (two women in a room with bathroom)
Mothers with children	26 rooms with bathroom
Fathers with children	5 rooms with bathroom
Intact Families	5 rooms with bathroom

**Families can have up to 4 children per household.

Overnight Dorm

Single men	64 beds, cots, mattresses
Single women	16 beds
*Families	*as available

Common Characteristics/barriers of Population Served

Each individual served by the Mission is a unique individual with their own life experiences shaping them into the people they are. Following is a listing of some of the common traits/life experiences of the population served by UGM-TC. However, it is important to remember that not all Residents have all the same traits. Also, some of the population may not have any of the following traits.

These examples are provided to give the staff a better understanding of what a Resident may have experienced in their life. The information is to provide insight and understanding of the population so that we might better serve them.

- May or may not have a 3rd grade education
- May have a college degree or even a PH.D.
- Cannot read or write
- Experienced domestic violence or witnessed physical violence
- May have substance use issues past or present

- May have a mental health diagnosis
- Aged out of foster care (In foster care as a child and now 18 without family)
- Served time in jail and/or prison
- Physical, developmental (born with a disability) or mental disability
- Have fixed income from Social Security Insurance (\$721 monthly)
- Veteran
- May have open or recent case with Child Protective Services
- Victim/victimized (often bodily harm)
- Participating in a diversion program such as drug court, RISE, T-Cats, or jail diversion program
- Separated from family
- Can't find affordable housing
- Vulnerable and easily taken advantage of
- Judged, paranoid, sense that others are out to get them
- Life has been chaotic
- Lived in crisis mode – go from one crisis to another
- Feel a sense of loss of power and control

Section 5. UGM-TC Environment

UGM-TC provides a program for men, women, families and children to help rebound from the economic, social, medical, and mental health problems that put them in the position of being homeless. Whether the individual is made homeless by economic hardship, domestic violence, the trauma of war, or physical or emotional challenges, UGM-TC acknowledges that these individuals have lost more than their homes. They have lost a sense of safety, health and the ability to support themselves.

UGM-TC strives to build a dependable, trustworthy relationship with Residents. UGM-TC does not pass judgment or make demands. Rather, UGM-TC provides space in which a person can openly discuss one's unique situation, needs, concerns, strengths and hope. UGM-TC recognizes the "big picture" of one's life rather than seeking a "quick fix". The program at UGM-TC is designed to include intensive supportive services to address education, employment, spiritual development, medical services and other needs necessary to give individuals experiencing homelessness the greatest opportunity to develop the skills and self-confidence to be the best that they can be on the path to self-sufficiency.

Environment

To best meet the above-mentioned goals for the Residents of UGM-TC, it is imperative to provide a safe structured environment. This environment will include the following:

- Safety first and foremost
- Present a calm environment
- Consistency in the routine and structure of the program
- Look for strengths in Residents
- Free from physical danger
- Free from verbal abuse

- Reduce the chaos
- Remove the drama
- Free from gossip and rumors
- Fairness – treat everyone the same
- Can be firm but also must be fair
- Say what you will do and mean what you say
- Follow through
- Unconditional Positive Regard and Kindness

Section 6. Snapshot of UGM-TC Program Description

UGM-TC provides a person-centered holistic approach and serves the “whole person the whole time”. Case Managers work with the Residents to address all aspects of the person by using a bio-psycho-social-spiritual model including the physical, spiritual, and social aspects of each individual.

UGM-TC provides food, shelter, and a warm bed to sleep in each night, where Residents can escape the fears of violence and drugs while residing in a safe healthy place. Medical needs are met with primary healthcare provided through the Healing Shepherd Clinic. The purpose of the clinic is to provide Residents with access to free, high-quality primary care services. Healthcare services at the clinic are provided by a staff nurse practitioner, volunteer doctors, and medical professionals. Patients are enrolled in the JPS system as part of their intake, helping keep emergency rooms clear.

UGM-TC provides case management services to assist Residents in navigating through life’s circumstances and barriers to a physically safe, financially stable, and independent home of their own. Case Managers assist Residents in getting connected with the appropriate resources, individual counseling, and group counseling as needed. Case Managers also follow-up with Residents to make certain they are taking their medications as prescribed on a regular basis. Additional Residents’ needs are met through case management services (to be defined further in manual), life skills classes, and social activities.

The Spiritual component of the program offers nondenominational chapel services every day. A comprehensive religious education program, ALPHA, is afforded to all Residents to explore the teachings of Jesus Christ in a friendly, relaxed small group setting and to discuss the aspects of Christian living.

People experiencing homelessness report feeling alone in the world because they lack a supportive relationship with family members and friends. UGM-TC provides a social support network so that individuals can regain a sense of self-worth, increase their ability to cope with stress and provide a sense of security. First and foremost, Residents build a supportive relationship with their Case Manager.

Case Manager Role

UGM-TC case management services has a written *Standards for Case Management* and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics to provide quality services, provide a basis for the development of case management and

enhance awareness of the values, knowledge, methods and skills needed to practice case management competently as a licensed social worker.

The social work Case Manager shall possess a baccalaureate or advanced degree in social work from a school or program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education; shall comply with the licensing and certification requirements of the state (in which she or he practices) and shall possess the skills and professional experience necessary to practice social work case management. (A Case Manager may possess a degree in a related field such as rehab science, etc. which affords the Case Manager counseling and human behavior knowledge and skills).

The practice of social work case management is complex, entailing multiple roles and skills. The social work Case Manager shall collaborate with clients to plan, implement, monitor, and amend individualized services that promote clients' strengths, advance clients' well-being, and help clients achieve their goals. Case management service plans shall be based on meaningful assessments and shall have specific, attainable, measurable objectives.

Assessment is a complex function requiring openness to a wide variety of information, both verbal and nonverbal, presented by the client in the context of the social environment. Assessment is an ongoing activity, not a one-time event.

The primary goal of case management is to optimize client functioning and well-being by providing and coordinating high-quality services, in the most effective and efficient manner possible, to individuals with multiple complex needs. The guiding purpose of case management is to prepare clients to be self-sufficient, obtain stable housing, and earn a living wage income.

The Case Manager does not work in isolation. The Case Manager works in collaboration with other Case Managers, with mentors/monitors, outside agencies and outside Case Managers to ensure the client's needs are being addressed with consistency in the process.

Mission Support Services Mentor/Monitor Role

The Mission support services staff/mentors/monitors are the gate keepers/front door of Union Gospel Mission-Tarrant County. Their greatest responsibility is to ensure the safety, security, and welfare of all guests, Residents, staff, and volunteers. As front line staff, mentors and monitors intervene in issues that jeopardize the safety of the Resident Community.

Mentors/Monitors are trained in de-escalation and to diffuse intensifying emotional responses from Residents. Mentors/Monitors maintain a calming presence in support of the Case Managers and Residents. Mentors/Monitors stand beside Case Managers when a Resident may be given information which will possibly make the Resident angry.

As the gatekeepers, Mentors/Monitors screen and monitor who comes in and out of the building and gated parking lots. Parking lots and entry doors require intense security because previous Residents or outside guests sometimes get angry if they

have been exited from the program, may have threatened staff, may have a restraining order against them (domestic violence against a Resident), or may have physically assaulted someone. Therefore, it is imperative that staff, Residents, and volunteers are always protected from any harm or possible harm.

Customer service is an integral part of the mentors'/monitors' job. From a person buzzing in to ask for a meal or a place to stay, to community members, volunteers, and partnering agencies to the Board of Directors, Mayor of Fort Worth, religious leaders and individual donors---Every encounter should be a positive experience creating a culture that is service focused. Take time to listen to the customers' needs, after all, you may be talking to the next million-dollar donor.

Mentors/monitors work together as a support services team in support of the program services. Mentors/monitors work directly with the Residents to provide order and stability to the Mission. Mentors/Monitors are role models of respectful behavior while assisting our Residents in learning stability and structure within the Mission.

Mentors/Monitors interact with Residents throughout the day providing direction for appropriate processes and policies while encouraging them to attend classes and case management. Mentors/Monitors are continually communicating with program staff regarding incidents, behaviors, and actions they have observed while working with Residents.

Case management staff and support services staff work together for the good of the Residents and UGM-TC's Mission. Support Services staff and case management staff are a team working together to provide support and encouragement to Residents and to one another. Together the team creates a positive environment and assist Residents in being the best they can be and helping Residents grow independent.

While UGM-TC has program expectations and Good Neighbor policies, the Residents who live at Union Gospel Mission-Tarrant County also have client rights.

Volunteer Office Contact Information

Volunteer Manager:

Dana Walser
(817)338-8402
dwalser@ugm-tc.org

Physical Address:

1321 E Lancaster Ave
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1957
Fort Worth, TX 76101-1957

Volunteer Requirements

Volunteer Application and Orientation

All adult volunteers (18 years and older) are required to complete an application and attend a one-hour orientation class before scheduling volunteer time.

*UGM does not provide service hours for court ordered or court recommended service.

Background Checks

All adult volunteers (18 years and older) are required to complete a background check. The Volunteer Office will contact you when your form comes back only if there is information on the report that requires further discussion.

Background checks will be renewed per UGM's discretion.

Youth Volunteers

All youth must be 12 years or older to volunteer on campus. An adult or parent volunteer must accompany youth volunteers (12 to 17 years of age). For groups, there must be at least one adult for every 10 youth. Youth under the age of 12 years are welcome to participate in some of our at home volunteer opportunities.

Scheduling Volunteer Time

Volunteers must schedule their volunteer time by logging on to the Volunteer Portal and self-scheduling or by contacting the volunteer coordinator directly. All volunteer time must be scheduled in advance. Volunteers cannot show up unannounced to serve.

Volunteers **are not** permitted to bring other adults with them who have not completed an application and attended an orientation unless previously approved by the Volunteer Office.

Signing In and Out

Each volunteer will be required to sign-in and out of each scheduled shift on the tablet located at the front counter using an assigned passcode.

Volunteers who do not yet have a passcode may use the paper sign-in sheet inside in the Volunteer Book located at the front desk.

Name Tags

Names tags are located at the front Mission Support counter near the Volunteer Kiosk. Each volunteer should wear a nametag with his/her first name clearly printed on it.

Absence Policy

Volunteering requires commitment; however, we understand that things come up. If you are unable to report as scheduled, please contact the Volunteer Office. It is important that you provide the Volunteer Office with as much notice as possible so we can ensure we find a replacement for that shift.

No Call, No Show

Volunteers who develop a pattern of no call, no show may not receive priority for scheduling, per the Volunteer Manager's discretion.

Cell Phones

Cell phone usage is not allowed while volunteering. Cell phones or other electronic devices should either be silenced or be kept in your vehicle.

Parking: Volunteers will park in the gated parking lot. To gain access to the lot, volunteers should turn into the semi-circle driveway, press the call box to give the front desk your name and what capacity you are volunteering in.

All valuables (purses, coats, backpacks, etc.) should be left locked in vehicles. Union Gospel Mission does not have space to store these items for volunteers and is not responsible for loss or theft of property.

Volunteers are asked to park in the center portion of the parking lot as we try to reserve the spots against the fence for our residents with vehicles.

Dress Code

Volunteers should dress conservatively and abide by the following:

Permitted

Long Pants or Jeans
Short Sleeve Shirts
Long Sleeve Shirts
Closed-toed Shoes

Not Permitted

Shorts
Tight Workout Clothing
Sleeveless or Cold Shoulder Tops
Sandals, Flip Flops or Crocs
High Heels
Slippers

When working in the dining hall/kitchen:

- Wearing a baseball cap or hairnet is required. We will provide a hairnet for anyone who does not bring their own baseball cap.
- All loose hair will need to be put up, including facial hair.

Volunteers who do not adhere to the above guidelines will be asked to leave and will be unable to volunteer during their scheduled time.

Photographs

Volunteers may take photographs of themselves while at the Mission, but pictures of staff, residents or guests are strictly prohibited, even if these individuals give verbal permission.

Inclement Weather

Since UGM-TC is 24-hour operation, we never close due to inclement weather.

However, our volunteer's safety is of high priority to us, therefore, we understand should inclement weather occur that you might choose to cancel your scheduled volunteer time.

Emergency Procedures

If during your volunteer time, you become aware of an injury or accident involving another volunteer or yourself, please report the incident immediately to the supervisor on staff. In the event of fire, exits are clearly marked, and you are asked to exit the building as quickly as possible. In the event of stormy weather, the staff will instruct you where to go to seek shelter.

Volunteer Boundaries

To respect the privacy of our residents, volunteers must have boundaries regarding interactions with residents and guests. While friendly and appropriate verbal interaction is encouraged, volunteers **must not**:

- Give out personal phone numbers or ask for the phone number of residents, guests or employees.
- Give out social media information or ask for the social media information of residents, guests, or employees.
- Disclose personal addresses.
- Invite residents, guests, or staff off-site.
- Provide transportation for residents, guests or staff.
- Be alone with residents or guests.
- Employ a resident currently in the program.
- Work with residents who are currently in our program in any other capacity.
- Loan or give money to a resident, guest, or an employee.
- Provide gifts to residents or guests.
- Fraternize or flirt with residents, guests or employees.
- Touch or have any physical contact with residents or guests, including children.
- Watch or supervise any child while their parent steps away.

Volunteer Opportunities

Kitchen Service

Time: 7 days a week (breakfast/lunch/dinner)

Volunteer Type: Individual or Group

Assist our kitchen staff in serving meals, clearing trays, serving water glasses, cleaning off tables and sweeping the floor.

Meal Serving Times:

Breakfast Serving: 5:30 AM – 7:30 AM

We have 5 positions for volunteers to help serve on the line or help with clean up.

Lunch Serving: 10:45 AM- 1:00 PM

We have 6 positions for volunteers to help serve lunch, 3-4 on the line serving food on to the trays and 2-3 to assist in the dining hall area. When not serving food, please help with cleaning up and getting ready for the next group.

Dinner Serving: 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM

We have 6 positions for volunteers to help serve dinner, 3-4 on the line serving food on to the trays and 2-3 to assist in the dining hall area. When not serving food, please help with cleaning up as this is the final meal of the day. Please do not leave until all clean up duties have been completed. Ask the staff in charge if you are unsure of what needs to be done.

Therapeutic Children's Enrichment Program Volunteers

Time: Weekdays (September–June)

Volunteer Type – Individual

Shifts available:

4:15 pm – 5:00 pm – Enrichment Activity Hour

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm - Homework / Power Hour

Commitment/Requirements: Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or the equivalent. We ask volunteers to commit to the entire semester/ at least one day per week.

The Therapeutic Children's Enrichment Program (TCEP) seeks to close the academic achievement gap and develop social skills for children ages K-8.

The TCEP assesses the reading and math levels for all children as they enter our program. These tests will assist us in preparing lessons that target skills needing improvement.

This volunteer opportunity is for individuals who have an interest in helping us to develop these skills in our children. Prior experience in education or working with groups of children in a structured environment is an added benefit to the children in the TCEP program.

Warehouse

Time: Monday-Friday, anytime between 9:00 AM -4:00 PM

Volunteer Type: Individual or Group

We are always excited to have individuals or groups serve in our warehouse. Those interested in serving in the warehouse should contact the Volunteer Manager at 817-338-8402 or dwals@ugm-tc.org.

Tasks would include sorting and organizing donated clothing, bedding, housewares, and small furniture items.

Chapel Leaders

Time: 7 days a week (afternoon and evenings)

Volunteer Type: Individual or Group

Further training required with Father Rogers Meredith

We welcome individuals and groups who are interested in sharing God's love by leading a chapel service or devotion with residents and outside guests. If you would like to participate, please contact Father Rogers Meredith, at 817-332-2922 or rmeredith@ugm-tc.org.

Alpha Leader

Time: Thursday evenings

Volunteer Type – Individual

The Alpha Course is an adult discipleship class which includes teaching on foundational Christian beliefs, plus how to live as a Christian in the modern world. Nicky Gumbel is the author and developer of the Alpha Course. Our residents attend the Alpha Course on Thursday evenings.

Further training required with Father Rogers Meredith

If you would like to participate, please contact please contact Father Rogers Meredith, at 817-332-2922 or rmeredith@ugm-tc.org.

Club UGM Instructor

Time: (Scheduled times vary)

Volunteer Type – Individual

We welcome prospective instructors to host developmental classes for residents at UGM-TC. We ask that you offer a commitment of at least one day per week in order to host a class.

Adopt-The-Dining-Hall

Time: Beginning of month

Volunteer Type – Individual or Group

Take one or more months out of the year to give the Dining Hall a new colorful cheery look. All decorations would need to be temporary and approved beforehand. Volunteers will need to schedule a time to come in and set up the items at the beginning of the month and schedule a time to come pick them up at the end of the month.

Special Events

Time: Various

Volunteer Type: Individual or Group

Plan or help facilitate a special event for our residents. Examples: holiday-themed parties, monthly resident birthday parties, Alpha celebrations, fundraisers, holiday decorating, etc.

Off-Site Opportunities

Time: Anytime

Volunteer Type: Individual or Group

- Written Encouragements: Write scripture or words of encouragement on 3X5 index cards or other small distributable cards.
- Sack Lunches: Following the guidelines provided by UGM, volunteers can make and donate sack lunches for UGM to distribute.
- Blessing Bags: Bags filled with travel sized toiletries and sometimes nonperishable snacks and seasonal items (such as hand warmers and gloves in the winter and sunscreen and bug spray in the summer).
Note: We do not accept mouth wash of any kind.
- Donation Drives: Located on our website, there is an Immediate Needs List that volunteers may use to host a donation drive.

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

As a volunteer, it is your right:

- To be assigned a meaningful task.
- To work in a friendly, clean and safe environment.
- To ask questions about your task.
- To be always treated with respect and kindness, by every member of the organization including residents, outside guests, employees and other volunteers.
- To offer input and feedback to the organization about the job or task you are performing.

As a volunteer, it is your responsibility:

- To follow the rules, policies and procedures of UGM-TC.
- Take instructions from the staff in charge of the area you are serving.
- To be prompt and ready to work at the assigned time, from start to finish.
- To give ample and proper notice if you are unable to serve at your scheduled time.
- To give notice if you will be unable to fulfill your responsibilities.
- To perform your tasks to the best of your ability.
- Respect the confidential nature of issues that may be shared with you.
- To abide by the Volunteer Boundaries for residents, guests and staff.

Confidentiality, Volunteer Requirements & Responsibilities Acknowledgement Form

I _____ acknowledge the following:

- 1. I understand that information I handle while working as a volunteer at Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County is confidential and personal. I also understand that this information is not to be shared with anyone outside this agency or with other people living at UGM-TC. **I further understand that violation of this policy will terminate my volunteer services with Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County.**

- 2. I have read and agree to abide by the Volunteer Requirements and Responsibilities of Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County.

Signature _____

Date _____

Photo Release Form

I permit Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County, its representatives and employees, authorization to take photographs, video and use of my personal story to be used in print, digital or any other media form.

I understand that Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County may use my photograph and/or personal story for publicity, advertising and other promotional purposes in newsletters, websites, videos, social media and other printed materials.

I also understand that my FULL NAME and other identifying information will not be used with these photographs or videos.

I understand and consent to the above:

Signature_____

Printed Name_____

Date_____