

# Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels

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- How to coordinate this at my place of work, worship or play!

And if we've missed anything, you'll know who to speak with and how to contact them!

This is just the beginning of a wonderful experience. We're so happy that you're joining with us in service to our Senior neighbors!

## The History of Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels

Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels has a fascinating history as one of Fort Bend County's oldest non-profit organizations.

Born of a grassroots effort by community leaders recognizing a growing population of homebound, isolated and hungry senior citizens, these compassionate visionaries provided 20,000 hot meals from a portable trailer in Rosenberg, during their first year of service in 1974.

Two years later, the program was officially recognized as a non-profit organization. By 1981, Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels joined the United Way of Texas Gulf Coast. Because of their success in providing hot, nutritious, meals to homebound senior citizens, the Houston-Galveston Area Council Area Agency on Aging asked Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels to expand service to neighboring Waller County.

Even today, Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels continues to evolve and is now recognized by the Meals on Wheels Association of America as a certified nutrition program, providing over 170,000 meals annually. In addition to nutrition programs to the homebound, expanded programs include emergency shelf stable meals, congregate meals, case management, health screenings, information and referral services, free installation of smoke detectors, recreation and seven congregate site locations throughout Fort Bend and Waller Counties.

While other programs across the nation are cutting back services and struggling with the loss of their volunteer support due to rising gas prices and difficult economic times, our program in Fort Bend County has enjoyed unprecedented support and growth!

Dedicated volunteers, private business owners, Police Departments, Fire Departments, churches, schools, clubs and national retail chains have joined in partnership with Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels to supplement the services we now offer and also make it possible to identify and serve increasing numbers of isolated, homebound and hungry Seniors!

Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels provides hot meals to elderly and frail persons 60 years of age and older, without regard to income, who are unable to safely prepare their own meals. The average participant is 78 years of age, lives alone and reports needing assistance with at least two independent activities of daily living. Many contend with serious health issues and 85% of those served live at or below poverty level. For these seniors meal assistance is crucial to their well being.

By enhancing the quality of life of our area Senior citizens through nutrition programs, services and resources, Senior are able to maintain their dignity and independence, remain in their homes, interact socially with others and continue to be an integral part of the community.

## **Senior Services**

### ***Meal Services***

The primary focus is the Meals on Wheels which provides three types of meal service;

Home delivered Meals which include one hot, frozen or boxed meal, delivered to the participants home five or more days per week. These meals meet at least 1/3 of the recommended daily allowance of all nutrients required by adults.

Emergency Shelf Stable Meals are distributed twice a year to all homebound and congregate center participants. It is recommended that an emergency meal be utilized when the agency is unable to deliver a meal due to emergency weather conditions. These meals have a shelf life of one year.

Congregate Meals include one hot meal five days per week which meets at least 1/3 of the recommended daily allowance of all nutrients required by adults. Congregate Meals are provided at the seven locations in Fort Bend and Waller Counties.

### ***Congregate Site Programs***

The Congregate Program provides an important opportunity for those who attend, to interact socially and take part in daily recreation programs with a full calendar of offerings, which include educational programs, exercise classes, dancing, holiday events and bingo.

Transportation is provided in air conditioned, handicapped accessible vans.

### *Health Screening*

Vital health screening for seniors is provided monthly at the congregate sites. The program includes screenings for hearing, vision, depression and other senior related screenings. Nutrition education programs are also provided through this program.

### *Case Management*

Individual Assessments are conducted to determine seniors' needs in the areas of social services, nutrition and health care. Once an assessment is completed, staff arrange for the appropriate services to be delivered. Follow-up reviews are made to insure that needs are being met.

Information, advocacy and referrals. A database of information relating to seniors and their needs is maintained and is a valuable resource in coordinating services, opportunities and referrals.

## **Community Partners and Financial Support**

The United Way of Texas Gulf Coast provides approximately one-fourth of the funding for these programs. Generous support is also received annually from the George Foundation, The Houston-Galveston Area Council Agency on aging, Texas Department of Human Services Community Development, Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA), Fort Bend County Commissioners Court, Waller County Commissioners Court, Sugar Land Community Development Block Grant, Missouri City Community Development Block Grant, and Fort Bend Community Block Grant.

In addition to these sources, Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels Volunteer Board of Directors, Andres Novoa of La Cocina Restaurant, community partners, staff and volunteers, organize annual fundraising events throughout the year. These activities are crucial to the continued success of meeting the increasing demand for services for seniors in Fort Bend and Waller Counties.

Planned giving and memorial gifts provide donors with opportunities to support these programs with scheduled gifts or gifts in honor of family members.

## Volunteer Service

Volunteers are our most valuable resource and an integral part of the success and continued expansion of services to Seniors in Fort Bend and Waller Counties. Our staff will work with you to make your gift of time and support to the program personally meaningful and provide you with positive supervision. We strongly believe in the principles of equal opportunity and recruit volunteers without regard to race, sexual orientation, age, national origin and disability.

### *Opportunities include:*

- Meal delivery
- Administrative support
- Congregate Center assistance
- Special events
- Fund Raising

### *Qualifications*

Volunteers provide needed services and support to the program at the direction of and on behalf of the organization, without compensation. To be officially enrolled, (and prior to the performance of assignments), an individual will complete a Volunteer application, sign release forms, submit driver's license and auto insurance information and attend a one hour orientation session.

For their safety, volunteers under the age of 16 must always be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older. Youth aged 16-17 who are not in the company of their parents/guardians must have a parental consent form/release in order to volunteer.

In order to protect our volunteers and participants, volunteers with direct client contact with vulnerable populations, are required to sign a release so that the agency may conduct a criminal background check. Volunteers who do not agree will be refused assignment. In addition, the following items will lead to instant rejection of a volunteer if they appear on a background check; *felony conviction, assault conviction (sexual or physical), DWI arrest or conviction within the last ten years, current warrant for arrest.*

A misdemeanor offense will require close examination by the Director of Volunteers. Generally, if the offense occurred within the last 5 years, the projects which the volunteer can participate in will be limited and may lead to rejection.

New volunteers have the right to view their Criminal History Background within the first 30 days of volunteering.

## *Performance Standards, Ethics, Hygiene*

Volunteers are expected to:

- Perform their duties to the best of their abilities, volunteer at their assigned times, and maintain clients' interest and the program mission as the primary focus.
- Be proactive in securing a replacement with an official FBSMOW volunteer if they are unable to make their assigned delivery, or notify Steven McClain at 281.633.7058 at least 24 hours in advance.
- Maintain an environment free of harassment (sexual, physical and verbal), discrimination and unprofessional conduct.
- Be well-groomed and dress in comfortable, business casual or casual clothing.
- Refrain from using, possessing, consuming, selling, or dispensing alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises or at service location. The presence of any person whose function is impaired by the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Access will be denied to corporate or service locations, to any person, staff, or volunteer exhibiting signs of impairment from the use of drugs, alcohol.

## *Personal Safety and Handling Emergency Situations*

Our volunteers' safety is a top priority. We want our volunteers to feel comfortable serving the community.

When on delivery, if a volunteer:

- Does not feel safe AT ANY TIME, he/she is to cease involvement in the task that poses a safety threat and immediately contact the Operations Manager.
- Is injured or involved in an accident during their assignment, he/she is to report the incident immediately to their liaison within the program area.
- Never leave your unattended car running. Lock valuables in the trunk of your car
- Park on the street, never in a clients driveway
- When entering a gated yard, leave the gate open while you are inside
- Be mindful of dogs that are protective of their territory and/or owners
- ***In case of an emergency involving the volunteer or program participant, call 911 and then call the office. Volunteers should stay at the scene until emergency personnel arrive.***
- Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts

When working with Seniors:

- Do not borrow or lend money to program participants
- Do not give out your home address or phone number to program participants
- Do not travel to your client's home after dark
- Maintain an appropriate distance from your clients and do not counsel them unless you are trained to do so.

*Note: Volunteers waive all claims for damages or loss of personal property that may be caused by any act or failure to act by agents, officers or employees of Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels. The volunteer assumes risk of all dangerous conditions in or about property where the volunteer is doing volunteer services and waives any and all specific notice and the existence of such condition*

### ***Serving and delivering meals sanitarily***

- While delivering the route, close the cooler to maintain the temperature inside
- Do not leave meals outside the home under any circumstance
- To insure the freshness of the meals, all deliveries are to be completed by 12:00 noon.
- Those volunteers working directly with meal preparation or service at the congregate site locations will be given training in food handling and preparation by the Operations Manager.

### ***Confidentiality and respect***

Our agency has a policy of respecting the dignity and worth of each volunteer, employee and program participant. We ask that each volunteer offer the agency his/her loyalty, respect and best efforts, *and* observe, maintain and protect the confidentiality of program participants *and* avoid sharing information with anyone which would identify the client, *and* treat all information regarding Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels, staff, volunteers and participants as privileged information *and* hold it in the strictest of confidence, *and* respect the cultural, religious, and political views of participants *and* refrain from imposing cultural, religious, and political views on participants.

*\*This manual is developed in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code for Social Services and Assistance (Title40) Department of Aging and Disability Services (Part1 )Contracting to provide Home-Delivered Meals (Chapter 55), Training Requirements (Rule 55.9)*



## Volunteer Handbook Confirmation

I have received the Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels Volunteer Handbook and have completed the required volunteer orientation.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date