



# Dinner Preparation Guidelines 2025

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Thank you for your participation in the Family Meal Program. The Family Meal Program supports our mission to keep families close by regularly providing dinners, to-go lunches, and homemade snacks for guests staying at the House. This program eases the financial burden on our families and helps them have more time to focus on their children.

## Volunteer Requirements

- A maximum of 10 people are allowed in order to be comfortable in the kitchen space.
- All participants must be at least 14 years old.
- Volunteers must be completely illness/symptom free (cold, flu, fever, stomach virus, etc.) for at least 72 hours prior to volunteering.
- Volunteers must wear gloves and have hair tied back. RMHC will provide gloves. Additional health practices during participation will include frequent hand washing and changing gloves, and no hair, face, or phone touching.

## How to Sign Up

- You can sign-up directly through our [website](http://www.rmhc-easternwi.org) (www.rmhc-easternwi.org).
- Visit our on-line [Family Meal Program Calendar](#) to find an available date.
- Once you have chosen a date, fill out the event details and click Schedule Event.
- You will receive a confirmation email.

## Cancellation Policy

In the unfortunate event that your group will be unable to provide your scheduled meal, contact Maggie Seelman, Family Meal Program Coordinator, at 414-935-6520 or [mseelman@rmhc-easternwi.org](mailto:mseelman@rmhc-easternwi.org) as far in advance as possible.

## Preparing For Your Dinner

### Menu Planning

- **\*\*RMHC Global Guidelines state that all food must be prepared and cooked on site, prepared in a commercial kitchen, or packaged from the store.**
- You should plan to serve **70 guests for dinner** but note that we cannot guarantee a specific number of participants due to the unpredictable nature of families' schedules.
- Choose a menu that can be executed by your group in the two hour time frame.
- Submit your menu at least one week prior to the date you are volunteering with as many details as possible. This will allow us to advertise your meal to all of the families in the House.
- **Dinner menu should include:**
  - A Main Entrée
  - A Side Dish
    - Fresh green salad
    - Vegetable
    - Fresh fruit
  - Beverages
  - Bread/Rolls

- Dessert

*\*\* Please consider offering a gluten free option or dairy free option for at least one of your items.*

### **Arrive at the House**

- Food preparation will occur from 3:00pm-5:00pm with dinner service from 5:00pm-6:00pm and clean up from 6:00-6:30pm. **Groups cannot arrive at the House before this due to limited staff and volunteer support.**
- Pull your vehicle up to the main entrance. The address is 8948 W. Watertown Plank Rd.
- At the second set of double doors, ring the doorbell to be let into the building.
- Let the volunteer Office Assistant know you are here for Family Dinner.
- Sign in at the front desk and you will receive a name badge to wear for the duration of your time at the House.
- Request a cart to unload all food. If you require assistance, please ask.
- After unloading your supplies, park your vehicle in the front surface lot and request to speak with the Family Meal Program Coordinator or Family Services to receive direction.

### **Prepare Your Meal**

- Wipe down the serving areas with a light soapy water mixture.
- Follow the Food Safety Guidelines. It is extremely important that every effort to prevent food borne illness is taken to ensure that we are providing a safe environment for our families.
- Make sure to repeatedly wash hands and change gloves throughout your visit.
- **\*\*Alcohol is not permitted in the House, for consumption or cooking, per RMHC House Policies.**

### **Serve Your Meal**

- Family Dinner is served from 5:00-6:00pm.
- Check-in with the Family Meal Program Coordinator or the Front Office a little before 5:00pm to notify them that dinner is ready to be served. There will be an announcement made for families.
- Ensure that all group members are wearing clean gloves and all food items are labeled and have an appropriate serving utensil.
- Serve your meal items from behind the serving counter, allowing families to form a line and receive food.
- Be prepared to verbally offer a list of ingredients in case a guest has food sensitivities or restrictions.
- Families who are physically present for a dinner have first priority to food, but we also accommodate for meals to be put aside for families not present during meal time.
  - After service, please make up a plate of food for the families on the list. The meals should be labeled with the date, family name, and room number and placed in the guest's refrigerator.
- If your meal allows for extra food, please feel free to invite house volunteers and staff to eat as well.

### **Clean-Up**

- You will be given a cleaning checklist. Please complete each item on the list before you leave.

- Run all your cooking and serving dishes through the commercial dishwasher. Families are responsible for doing their own dishes.
- Speak with the Family Meal Program Coordinator or Family Services staff if you are interested in a tour of the House.
- Sign out at the front office.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Will I have to bring my own dishes, serving utensils, plates, etc.?**

No. The House will provide all of the dishes, glasses, silverware and utensils needed to serve families.

### **What kitchen supplies are available to me?**

The Family Meal Kitchen is equipped with all of the supplies that you will need to prepare your meal. There are bowls, baking pans, blender, serving utensils, knives, cookie sheets, skillets, pots & pans, measuring cups, an 8 burner gas stove and 4 ovens.

### **I have a group interested in participating in the Family Meal Program, but our numbers exceed the maximum participants in the guidelines- can we still participate?**

If you have a volunteer group that exceeds the number of participants stated in the guidelines, please contact the Family Meal Program Coordinator at [mseelman@rmhc-milwaukee.org](mailto:mseelman@rmhc-milwaukee.org) or 414-475-0263, to discuss what opportunities might be available.

### **Will the amount of families served always be 70 for dinner?**

This is an estimate. You should prepare these amounts for dinner, however, due to the unpredictable nature of family's schedules, we cannot guarantee how many people will be present for the meal.

### **Can I take photos at the House?**

You are welcome to take photos of group members while at the House, however we ask that you do not take photos of children, parents, and other families who are staying at the House. A staff member or volunteer may request to take a photo of your group to share on the RMHC Facebook page and/or website, so please notify them if you wish to not have your photo taken.

### **If I have a recipe that requires marinating in advance can I do that at home?**

No. The food that you are bringing into the House should be unopened and unaltered from when you purchased it.

### **Can I cut my veggies at home to help speed up preparation?**

No. Any preparation of food must be done at the House. To simplify the preparation guidelines, RMHC is asking that you purchase the food and bring it to the House unaltered.

### **Does RMHC have spices I can use?**

Yes. RMHC will have an assorted variety of spices available for your group's use. These spices are given as donations, so if your meal requires an uncommon spice, please make sure that your group brings that spice.

**Will I be able to come early to start cooking in a crockpot?**

Yes, you can come as early as 9:30am on the day of your scheduled meal. Please be aware, no maintenance of food throughout the day can be assigned to volunteers or staff of RMHC to manage.

**If my group is catering food for the meal, does someone have to be at the House by 3:00pm?**

No. We ask that someone is at the House by 4:00pm to get organized in the kitchen and make sure everything is set up for dinner service at 5:00pm. Please notify the Family Meal Program Coordinator if you will be catering your food, so that staff is aware the group might not arrive until 4:00pm.

**How long will it take to clean up after dinner?**

The suggested allotted cleanup time is a half hour.

**If I'm unable to cook for this many people, what other opportunities are available?**

If you are unable to cook for or financially feed this many people for dinner, please consider Lunch-2-Go. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the food required to make lunches is provided, so all you need to do is get a group of people together for a 2 hour time commitment.

## Volunteer Expectations

As an RMHC volunteer, high standards of confidentiality, service, and care are required. We ask that Meal Program Volunteers understand:

- You must be healthy and infection free in order to enter RMHC.
- Any information about families staying or donors/donations received is strictly confidential and should be handled as such.
- Questions regarding a child's diagnosis or medical treatment should not be asked.
- Sales or solicitations of guest families is not allowed by the visiting group while on the premise.
- Promoting of religious or political beliefs is not permitted.
- The use of photos, stories, videos or any other information related to families or the House without signed approval is prohibited.
- Courtesy should always be extended to families, staff and other volunteers.
- Your personal contact information should not be given out to the guest families.
- RMHC is a smoke-free facility. Smoking is not allowed inside or outside of our House, except for the designated smoking area on the south side of the building.

