



**MISSION**  
WACO • WORLD

# Volunteer Manual

1315 N. 15th Street, Waco, TX 76707

254.753.4900

volunteers@missionwaco.org

www.missionwaco.org

**Changing lives through hands-on compassion**

## **Enrolling as a Volunteer**

All volunteers must:

- complete a **volunteer application**
- supply one **reference**
- **be approved** by the organization to work with Mission Waco
- complete a **driver info form** if you will be transporting anyone in your personal vehicle or Mission Waco vehicle

Training varies according to the type of commitment desired. Those who work directly with the unchurched on an ongoing basis are encouraged to visit at least one Mission Waco site and must attend an **orientation meeting** with a Mission Waco staff member or representative.

## **Background**

Mission Waco was founded on the premise that God's Good News touches all people regardless of their circumstances. Initially funded in part by a Christian foundation under Cross Cultural Experiences, Inc., Mission Waco began in the spring of 1992 to reach the unchurched in Waco. Jimmy and Janet Dorrell were employed to direct the organization. The Dorrell's background was primarily in mission outreach, particularly with at-risk populations. They had spent several years involved with outreach efforts to lower income residents in North Waco and in various parts of the world. The corporate name changed in 2012 to Mission Waco, Mission World, Inc.

Focusing first on lower income, multi-housing residents, the organization began by establishing small group meetings throughout the community. Through weekday ministries, Bible studies, special events, and relationship-based involvement, Christian volunteers invested themselves in the lives of those who often found themselves caught in life's web of dilemmas. Such involvement subsequently allowed the volunteer to share the Gospel of Christ in a compassionate way that could genuinely be heard.

## **What Mission Waco Is...**

- **A Christian, interdenominational, holistic ministry** that works with people at many levels
- **A ministry that focuses on training middle-class Christians to work among the poor and develop a Christian worldview**
- **A ministry that focuses on relationships with the marginalized unchurched.** Therefore, the ministry generally includes many types of personal compassionate caring. Meeting the unchurched person in their turf and accepting where they are in life is basic, then flexing as the participants become more involved to meet additional needs & nurture their growing interest in Christ.

## **... And Is Not**

- **Mission Waco is not a church.** It is a ministry to the unchurched. One of our goals is to promote local churches and encourage new believers to become involved in one that meets their growing needs.
- **Mission Waco is not an agency.** Although we perform many social services to people in need, we do not advertise ourselves as a rescue mission, a soup kitchen, homeless ministry, or a food bank. We do consider ourselves a "Christian social ministry."
- **Mission Waco is not a "hyper-evangelistic" outreach ministry.** Although the organization does recognize validity of some other forms of "evangelism," our role is one of relationship or friendship based evangelism. Street preaching, handing out tracts, and onetime "witnessing" events are typically not used by Mission Waco. Because many of the unchurched have seen abuses or been repulsed by such approaches, they are often unwilling to really "hear" the Gospel. Through caring relationships that show Christ-like compassion, the unchurched can overcome those barriers that separate them from a personal relationship with God. "Pre-evangelism" events are encouraged to build opportunities to share Christ.

## **Volunteers / Training / Accountability**

Volunteers are the “heart” of Mission Waco. Driven by a desire to share with others what God has done in their own lives, Christian volunteers learn how to communicate in ways the unchurched can understand. Often through meeting specific needs, conversations, or small group meetings, the volunteer is able to break through walls of indifference or hardness with the Gospel. Volunteers learn to use their special gifts and abilities for reaching others, as well as develop new skills that are effective.

Mission Waco also works out of a teamwork concept. Volunteers who identify with the ministry work together with other volunteers or staff to determine how to approach their target group. To avoid “personality driven” ministry, we encourage teams to strategize, pray, and work together to reach the unchurched. A significant amount of freedom is allowed to the volunteer team to shape their specific ministry. Reporting to the larger group of volunteers each week keeps others informed of how things are going.

Consistent with the team approach, in most cases volunteers should work in groups of two or more. Individual decisions that a volunteer makes, even if it involves participants, which are not approved of by the team, do not represent Mission Waco. (For example, if a volunteer takes a teen out to eat without the team’s encouragement/approval, then the activity is not a Mission Waco sponsored activity.) Activities must be discussed in group meetings prior to the engagement.

- a. Volunteers are expected to uphold high moral integrity.
- b. Volunteers should not have participants over to his/her house or apartment alone, and without previously discussing the event with the Mission Waco program director.
- c. Volunteers need a signed parent permission form or release form for those participants with them during activities.
- d. All volunteers are required to have a background check (\$5 fee).
- e. Volunteers should have access to first aid supplies in case of an emergency.
- f. Any child under age 18 with whom a volunteer works that shows obvious signs of child abuse or neglect or mentions such to the volunteer should be reported to the Child Protective Services hotline. There are some cases where issues of poverty may be misconstrued as child abuse or neglect, so if you have concerns or questions about a child being abused or neglected you may want to contact one of our staff social workers before you call the hotline.
- g. Any activities or actions that include sexual abuse, harassment, or corporal punishment are not allowed by staff, volunteers or participants toward any other staff, volunteers, or participants. All suspected or actual activity should be immediately reported to the appropriate program director and/or management staff, and written up on an incident report. Corporal punishment is defined as the deliberate infliction of pain intended to punish a person or change his/her behavior.
- h. Any volunteer who is currently aware of involvement in illegal or unethical activity by a participant, volunteer or staff member should report that to the program director or management staff of Mission Waco. Volunteers should also avoid dangerous situations that might cause problems for their personal safety.
- i. Volunteers are expected to follow the Assistance Guidelines of Mission Waco when dealing with participants.

## **Vehicle Use**

The Board of Directors has determined that anyone representing Mission Waco who transports participants or uses their personal vehicle on behalf of Mission Waco must be at least 19 years of age, have a valid driver’s license, have one or less moving traffic violations in the past three years and have current liability insurance on the vehicle in use. Those volunteers willing to use their personal vehicle must complete the “Driver Information Form” and provide a copy of driver’s license and liability insurance and driving record info which must be on file in the Mission Waco office. If conditions are met, approval is automatic.

A Mission Waco van may be driven by approved drivers who are 21 years of age or older. The Driver Information Form must be completed. A copy of a valid driver’s license must be on file & submitted to Mission Waco’s insurance company.

**ALL PARTICIPANTS OF MISSION WACO MUST USE SEAT BELTS DURING TRANSPORT!** There must be a working seat belt available for each person in the vehicle. Seat belts must be worn. **ALL TRAFFIC RULES MUST BE OBEYED** -- such as speed limits, full and complete stops at stop signs, etc. If passengers become unruly, drive vehicle to a safe place as safely and quickly as possible and stop the vehicle until order is restored.

Van usage is based on program reservation and availability, with final decision for priority made by operations/administration staff. Request must be confirmed based on calendar commitments. Call the office (753-4900) to request reservation dates. If you notice any repairs needed on the vans, notify the office. Do not return vans with less than 1/4 tank of gas.

### **Sign In**

Volunteers need to sign in every time you volunteer. If you don’t see a sign-in sheet, ask a staff member where it is kept at your program site. If there is no sign-in sheet, offer to go get one from the main office!

**We need everyone to sign in every time.**

## **A Way to Look at Helping**

In our society, there is a tendency to withhold resources unless we can validate the need and be sure of our gift's good use. But looking at the life of Jesus, we see Him meeting basic needs (with some left over!) Even if we are "manipulated" or scammed, the joy of giving is ours. The recipient will stand before the same just God and be accountable for use of the resources even as we are. Use wisdom and discretion, but make giving a way of life.

If you want to talk through some of these tough issues or seek some advice, call a Mission Waco social worker. Like Solomon said, "two are better than one!"

## **Assistance Guidelines**

1. By its mission statement, **Mission Waco's goal is to reach the whole person with the whole Gospel of Christ.** Therefore, physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs are all important. Whether giving a cup of cold water in Jesus' name or praying with someone to receive Christ as Savior, our desire is to be gracious and wise stewards of God's wonderful and bountiful resources. "To whom much is given, much will be required."

2. We affirm that God is the giver of all good and perfect gifts. We also believe that God wants all of creation to be fed, clothed, housed, nurtured, freed from the bondage of sins, and loved. Therefore, the beginning point for meeting all needs is to pray for the person in need, asking God to meet the need.

(It may be appropriate, after you have spent some time with the person and communicated your care for them through questions and compassionate responses, to ask the person if they would be comfortable going to God with you right then, asking for his help and guidance. Praying with them without talking through their concerns and possible solutions could make them feel patronized, not listened to, not taken seriously, or not loved. It is important to start "where they are." Always give good eye contact, listen, and try to reflect back your concern for their situation. Avoid interrogating, preaching, or criticizing.)

3. Because there are limited physical resources and because of the impossibility of determining the best resolve in each situation, the following guidelines are an attempt to help make wise choices.

a. Explain to the person with the request the principal in #2 above. Let them know what a great opportunity this need provides to trust God. Tell them that our first commitment is to ask God to meet the need and trust that He will do so. Let them know that Mission Waco is not a social service agency, but a Christian ministry seeking to bring people to holistic, abundant life through Jesus Christ. (Do not feel pressured to make a quick decision or "rescue" the person in need. Remember that crises do not usually occur overnight, but are the result of several choices over a period of time. Asking for some time to pray about your decision or talk with another Christian about it usually results in a wiser decision.)

b. Let them know that we also work with Caritas and other agencies in the community. Ask if they have any problem checking with those agencies about this need. (Note: Unfortunately, some people "use" the system.) A list of referral agencies and their services is available.

c. Our priority is those who are active in our groups -- "Mission Waco participants". Let the person know that as Christians, we are committed to those God calls to be among us, our "family," first and that they are invited to be a part of our fellowship. Ask if they are currently involved in a church (and if they have sought assistance there -- their spiritual family should be meeting their needs if possible), and find out about their spiritual background and present relationship with God. Invite them to come be part of a group. Let them know that besides the most basic decisions (i.e. food, clothes), most decisions are made by two or more persons.

d. Dignity is critical in our assistance. Giving a job/task to the person in need is often a better alternative than a direct handout. If health, transportation, or other issues do not allow work, ask what they could do to help toward the assistance requested (i.e. some people volunteer at the Voucher Center when they receive clothes, etc.)

e. Let them know we have limited funds and cannot meet each need. Generally, Mission Waco does not provide financial assistance for rent, utilities, or transportation. We believe God has called us to focus our resources on life-changing, abundant life-giving programs and relationships -- addressing the root causes/issues that lead to basic needs going unmet. Give them an overview of our services (a list is available) and connect them with Rita at the office if they would like to get involved, need more information or would like to visit. Assure them that we are concerned and will be praying that God will continue to meet the need to His will.

## **Finances**

Volunteers **must have a receipt** that validates any **approved purchases** in order to get reimbursement.

## **Specific Assistance**

Do not feel compelled to give, especially if you feel some uncertainty that might be from the Lord. (Do not give out cash to the person asking for assistance.)

1. **FOOD** - Caritas provides food and must be called/visited first before they give food. The Salvation Army provides some meals every day. We serve breakfast at First Lutheran at 10th & Jefferson at 6:30 a.m. on Fridays, and at the Meyer Center at 13th & Washington on Mon-Thurs and Sat. You may decide to give them food out of your own pantry or buy them a meal. In most cases, do not give out money for food.

2. **TRANSPORTATION / GASOLINE** - We rarely buy bus tickets or provide transportation needs. If you decide to help with gasoline, go to the gas station with them and put in \$5 worth of gas. If you provide a ride for someone, you should have insurance and seat belts. Also, use caution when transporting and take another person with you. (**Driver Form** must be completed.)

3. **SHELTER/RENTAL ASSISTANCE** - Because of the difficulty of meeting these needs, much discretion should be used.

A. **Overnight / Short Term Lodging** - Mission Waco's My Brother's Keeper offers shelter for the chronically homeless, with intake Mon-Sat at the Meyer Center, 1226 Washington Ave, and most Sundays at Church Under the Bridge. Salvation Army (4th and Clay) allows one night (or more) per month with food. Compassion Ministries is open to women and children (and men who are part of a family unit). The Family Abuse Center shelters women and children who are victims of domestic violence, and The Freeman Center is a residential substance abuse treatment center. Personal families help out in some cases.

## **Theology**

Mission Waco considers itself within mainstream Christian doctrine. The Apostle's Creed is foundational to the volunteers. Believing that every person will stand before God in eternity and enter the Kingdom of God via a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as the only "way, truth, and life," (John 14:6), the organization concerns itself with the centrality of the Good News. As an interdenominational ministry, however, a delicate balance must be maintained between central and non-central viewpoints of the volunteers. Non-central, doctrinal issues, which typically divide the Christian church, are to be only discussed as "personal opinions" and not the view of Mission Waco. Because many seekers often get sidetracked and confused about such issues, it is important that the volunteer focus on the basics of the Christian message.

**"The Cost of Discipleship"**- Mission Waco also attempts to avoid "cheapening" the Gospel. Although affirming the free gift of salvation through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection, following Him is much more than mere words. Those who choose salvation should understand there is a cost and a lifestyle that shows validity of the new birth.

**Children** - Young children who come to Mission Waco activities are not generally pushed to "accept Christ." Many are later in life confused or believe they are Christian, when perhaps they made only an emotional decision from peer or group pressure. We must work together as a team to determine how best to affirm the decisions and spiritual development of younger children.

B. **Longer Term Lodging** - Compassion Ministries is the best referral for homeless women/children/families. Send people in need to 1421 Austin for an intake (currently on Tuesday afternoons) and the staff will determine available resources (or let them call 755-7640).

4. **UTILITIES / OTHER BILLS** -- Mission Waco does not pay these. Refer to Caritas (753-4593), the Salvation Army (756-7271), E.O.A.C. (753-0331) or have them contact our social services center at 753-4900.

5. **HEALTH / MEDICINE** - Mission Waco and Family Health Center have clinics at Meyer Center, 1226 Washington. Call the social worker for specific needs. Caritas often helps with prescription needs. (note: You are required to keep a First Aid kit at your site and with you when you work with the people. Also, First Aid training is encouraged.)

6. **EMPLOYMENT** - Jobs provide the best way to help a person have dignity and become empowered. Whether a short term day labor job or full-time employment, always be on the lookout for ways to provide jobs. Encourage your friends, churches, or business contacts to work with you in this way. \$8.00 an hour is a good amount -- more than minimum wage gives add'l dignity!

7. **CLOTHES / ETC.** - Vouchers for free clothing are available at our Meyer Center, 1226 Washington Ave. (check with main office for hours). The vouchers can be redeemed at our clothing Voucher Center at the warehouse in back of 1817 Franklin (check with main office for hours). Each family can get a voucher every three months. Both Caritas and Salvation Army provide clothes and some occasional furniture.

8. **SPECIAL NEEDS** - It is difficult to have a standard here. There are legitimate needs that are worth considering, i.e., funeral costs, children's needs, etc. If you see that God is leading that way, meet some of the need and help them trust God for the rest in another way.