



2022 VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

ST. FRANCIS HOUSE – 70 WASHINGTON STREET – ST. AUGUSTINE, FL. 32084

PORT IN THE STORM / ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES – 1375 ARAPAHO AVENUE – ST. AUGUSTINE, FL. 32084

WELCOME!

We are so grateful that you have chosen St. Francis House, a program of St Augustine Society, to share your time and talents. Our volunteer team assists in the kitchen, pantry, office, and at special events. ***You are essential*** to our ability to serve the needs of those in our community who are unhoused.

This Handbook has been produced to help you become acquainted with our history, mission, and values as well as some of our policies and practices. ***Please read this Handbook carefully*** and refer to it if questions arise. However, we realize that no handbook can answer all the questions that you may have and encourage you to come to us if you feel that you need an answer or clarification that is not provided here. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the Assistant Director.

We depend on you – your success is our success!

OUR HISTORY

To Joan Lohr, the need for a facility to feed the hungry was evident 14 years before it became a reality. However, it wasn't until she joined forces with Fr. Robert Baker, then pastor of the Cathedral Basilica, that the movement became a reality.

In 1984, St. Augustine Society, Inc. was formed with Lohr at the helm. The first meals were served at the St. Paul AME Church with volunteers from the community and churches providing the manpower. The organization moved to its own building at 70 Washington Street in 1985 and began services under the name of St. Francis House.

Although much has changed, services continue in the same building to this day. Additional services and buildings were added as the years progressed.

1986: Shelter for men added

1987: Shelter for women added

2011: 64 Washington Street leased from St. Mary's Baptist Church for Transitional Living

2012: 76 Washington Street purchased

2013: 64 Washington Street purchased

2016: Street Outreach Services (SOS) for adults launched

2016: Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center building purchased (1375 Arapaho Ave.)

2017: SOS Youth Street Outreach launched

2017: Port in the Storm day services launched

2019: Port in the Storm overnight shelter opened

The most significant changes came in 2013 with the new leadership of Executive Director, Judy Dembowski. Programs have grown from primarily meeting basic needs to the present housing-focused, client-centered format for individuals and families with children.

In 2015, our board of directors drafted a new strategic plan confirming our mission to provide housing crisis services to all in need. The decision was made to expand services to populations unserved in our community – in particular, unaccompanied/homeless youth.

A building was purchased for the new youth initiative in late 2016. The day drop-in program for youth opened in February 2017. The building has 16 shelter beds for homeless youth. Port in the Storm is a safe place off the streets for homeless/unaccompanied youth in crisis. Caring adults provide stability, hope and a path to successful future through Positive Youth Development programming.

A major hurricane devastated the Washington Street campus in October 2016. Renovation of two buildings are complete. The final building, which is still under construction, will serve as our family home, with space for eight families, and an area for respite for those suffering from homelessness that need a place to recover once released from the hospital.

Today, the Programs of St. Augustine Society, which include St. Francis Housing Crisis Center, Street Outreach Services, and Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center, provide solutions that change lives for unhoused youth, adults, and families.

OUR VISION

The Programs of St. Augustine Society envisions a future in which all those in St. Johns County have a safe, permanent place to call home.

OUR MISSIONS

St. Francis House / St. Francis Family House Mission

To engage vulnerable families and single adults without housing in compassion shelter, and opportunity driven programming to ensure their homelessness is rare, brief, and one time.

Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center Mission

To provide services that nurture potential, promote self-esteem, and support youth in moving beyond the streets.

OUR VALUES

Commitment to Excellence

The Programs of St. Augustine Society has a passion for researching and implementing best practices that promote an end to homelessness through measurable outcomes.

Honesty forms the basis of all interactions with clients. Building relationships with the clients we serve is based on trust, honesty, and non-judgmental communication.

Client-Centered Work

We believe ending homelessness should be an active partnership between the client and caring professionals that engage clients in an asset-based (not a problem-focused), plan to overcome barriers associated with homelessness and street life.

Self-Determination

We believe that all clients, regardless of their circumstances, deserve to be offered safety, support, and the final voice in the direction of their life. We will work to empower our homeless and at-risk clients to regain self-sufficiency to the greatest of their ability.

OUR PROGRAMS

The Washington Street Campus name has been recently revised to “St. Francis Housing Crisis Center” to reflect the comprehensive scope of services provided to homeless and less-fortunate men, women, and children. St. Francis House remains the only full-time emergency shelter between Jacksonville and Daytona Beach.

- Emergency shelter and housing-focused for men, women, and families
- The St. Francis House food program continues to provide a daily noon meal to anyone who is hungry
- St. Francis House and Port in the Storm now provide adult and youth Street Outreach Services (SOS) for St. Johns County. Our SOS teams venture into the county, bringing essential supplies and offering services to homeless adults and youth
- Port in the Storm Youth Center, on Arapaho Avenue, is a youth drop-in center currently open from 8 A.M - 6 P.M and is an overnight shelter for unaccompanied homeless youth

Throughout the years our volunteers and donors have been, and continue to be, the heart and soul of St. Francis House.

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Professional Boundaries

The St. Francis philosophy is grounded in the belief that all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and in the belief in the healing power of humane, caring relationships between staff and clients. Many of the clients who come to our programs have been mistreated in some way during their lives, which can result in continued confusion, fear or distrust of relationships with others.

St. Francis staff play a unique role in the lives of the clients that come to our programs. We must establish relationships with clients that demonstrate caring, safety, and predictability. **The nature of professional relationships, as opposed to those with friends or family members, must remain clear to both clients, volunteers, and staff. Maintaining boundaries assure the integrity of care at St. Francis. Overlapping or crossing the boundaries between staff, clients, and volunteers can cause confusion, difficulty in maintaining confidentiality and be detrimental for the clients we serve. Do not share any personal information about yourself or others. This also protects the volunteer from allegations and possible future harassment should a problem arise.**

If you have any questions whatsoever, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer at St. Francis Housing Crisis Center **you have the right:**

- To be treated with respect, equality and dignity
- Receive a clear, comprehensive job description
- Receive training for your job and ask for support when needed
- To be safe on the job, have choices and feel comfortable about saying “no”
- To take care of yourself to make sure **you are not overextending yourself, burning out, or causing yourself physical, mental or emotional harm by taking on roles that are not a good fit**
- Address areas of conflict with the appropriate Volunteer Lead or Volunteer Coordinator

You can always go directly to the **Marketing/Volunteer Coordinator** or the **Assistant Director**.

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (cont.)

As a volunteer **you have the responsibility to:**

- Maintain the same standards of confidentiality as staff and be subject to the same prohibitions and standards concerning disclosure of information. Anyone receiving services at St. Francis House or Port in the Storm is a client and has the right to privacy of all personal information.
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator if you need to change your schedule.
- Notify your Volunteer Lead if you are unable to work your shift.
- To sign in and out of the volunteer log during each volunteer shift.
- Do not borrow or lend property or money to staff or a client; nor exchange any personal information about yourself or others or accept gifts from staff or a client.
- Do not have any kind of social contact with current or former clients beyond the normal scope of duties of your volunteer position, either at St. Francis House or off premises. If a social or personal relationship does exist with a client, no volunteering or visiting while client is on premises.
- Notify a supervisor or staff member immediately if there is an injury or accident. If the injury is minor, first aid may be given. If the injury is serious or life-threatening, dial 911 for immediate medical help.
- Refer any media inquiries or opportunities to the Marketing/Volunteer coordinator or Assistant Director.
- Refer any donor inquiries to the Assistant Director.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that is not detrimental or a detraction to the reputation of St. Francis House or Port in the Storm. *Some* examples are: use of substances that interfere with your ability to perform duties; conduct that is discriminatory with respect to race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation or handicap; sexual harassment or posting anything on social media that would reflect poorly on the agency or compromise the privacy of our clients.
- Do not to assist clients off St. Francis House or Port in the Storm premises. Examples of this would include giving rides to clients or delivering items for a client off St. Francis House property.

Additional Information

St. Augustine Society, Inc. dba St. Francis House and Port in the Storm is a 501c3 organization, EIN 59-2475614. Judith Dembowski is the Executive Director and all activities here at St. Francis are overseen by our Board of Directors. For donor information contact Karen.Hensel@StFrancisShelter.org; 904-824-8987

Hours of Operation

Administration Office: M-F from 8AM to 4PM at 1375 Arapaho Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084

Client Services: 7 days a week from 9AM – 5PM at 70 Washington St., St. Augustine, FL 32084;

Kitchen: 7 days a week

- Lunch preparation begins at 8:00 a.m.
- Lunch Service is from 10:45a.m – 12:00 p.m.; a free lunch is available to anyone

Foodbank/Pantry: 7 days a week from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Volunteer General Information

Contact Information: St. Francis House, 70 Washington St., St. Augustine, FL 32084 /
Phone: 904-829-8937

If possible, please call the Volunteer Coordinator or your position supervisor if you cannot complete your assigned volunteer time or have any changes in your volunteer schedule.

Parking: Nearby parking is available on the west side (only) of Washington Street. Do NOT park near the yellow curbs. You will be ticketed.

Kitchen/Pantry: report to the cook on duty for work assignment

ALWAYS WEAR CLOSED TOED SHOES AND COMFORTABLE CLOTHING. In the kitchen, please have your hair tied back or wear a cap. Please sign the volunteer log with your hours.

ALL GROUPS must be pre-approved by volunteer coordinator. Generally, we do not have volunteer groups of more than 8 people. A group application form may be completed by the group leader.

ANYONE volunteering at St. Francis House **must complete and sign**: a volunteer application, the volunteer handbook, and volunteer agreement.

ANYONE under the age of 18 –must be accompanied by an adult in the same room.

- Must have an application signed by a parent or guardian and volunteer with an adult who has completed an application.
- Cannot volunteer in the kitchen but may assist in the dining room.