

Annunciation House

El Paso, TX

SITE INFORMATION

Site Description

Annunciation House provides shelter to economically poor immigrants and refugees at several houses of hospitality in El Paso. They have traditionally provided hospitality to migrants who stay anywhere from a few weeks to a few months with us. In the last few years, while they continue to provide longer-term hospitality to small numbers of people, the majority of our guests have been Central American refugees who have recently been released from detention and who stay with us for a day or two while they make plans to travel on to rejoin family elsewhere in the country. The work is constantly changing as both forces in Latin America and immigration policies here in the U.S. alter the flow of migrants and refugees across the border. They seek always to respond to the needs of the people they serve, and they change as the needs change.

Student volunteers must be able to handle continual turnover of guests and must accommodate the needs of people whose life stories may be difficult to hear. They constantly remind the volunteers that they must be willing to be inconvenienced for the sake of the poor. Please visit the website for more information about the history, mission, and philosophy at www.annunciationhouse.org.

Student Responsibilities

Annunciation House is a volunteer organization, and volunteers live and work at the houses of hospitality. The volunteers work under the supervision of a House Coordinator, a volunteer who has typically worked at a particular house for at least a year. The volunteer staff is responsible for the operation of the houses, attending to the needs of the guests, coordinating the meals, picking up food donations, assigning chores, helping guests make travel arrangements, doing laundry, doing house and car maintenance, and all the other things necessary to maintain houses of hospitality for an average of 50 long-term guests and as many as several hundred short-term guests each week.

Of all the works that the volunteers are asked to offer, none is more important than that of being a welcoming presence to those who come. This is the work of listening to the story that comes from the heart or playing with a lonely child, taking a walk with a runaway, or holding a baby for an overwhelmed mother. This is the work of living with those whom one must see as brother or sister, mother or father, son or daughter. It is the work of building community and creating family with those who hunger to belong and to hear someone say "yes" to them. This is the work that volunteers do that has no days and no time to measure its gift. While offering hospitality is our primary work, there is other work that we do that volunteers might be asked to become involved in according to the house's needs at any given time. The areas of this work include education, advocacy, and administrative support.

Site Interaction

The student will be in direct contact with the people served at the houses, providing hospitality and resource assistance. A large portion of the work is simply to be present and walk with the poor in migration. Since the great majority of interactions with guests are in Spanish, and CUA students are with us for only 10 weeks, we ask that applicants have conversational Spanish language skills. It is possible to volunteer with very limited Spanish speaking skills, but it is challenging.

Please see the website for more details about how volunteer time is spent and expectations of volunteers.

Student Orientation

Students will receive a comprehensive, intensive, one-week orientation to the work of the houses, other resources within the El Paso area from which our guests may benefit, and immigration issues at large.

Site Dates

May 25-August 3

Housing

Annunciation House will provide housing and meals for the student volunteers. Students will live in the same location that they work. There is a section of the house that is designated for volunteers. Student will have their own room or will share with one other volunteer. There is a common living area and bathroom in the volunteer section as well. They will live in intentional community with four to six other volunteers (including other summer volunteers, the majority of whom are also college students).

Site Hours

Volunteers are given one day off a week. During the week, they are scheduled for several house shifts of eight hours each. They also have other responsibilities to fulfill, and can decide how to manage their time when not on shift so as to complete their other work. The schedule of shifts changes by week, and some responsibilities also rotate. So, it's not possible to say exactly which hours and days the student will work, but the work will occupy at least 40 hours a week.

Support

The Annunciation House staff, permanent volunteer staff, and other summer volunteers will support CUA students. Students will be mentored by the House Coordinator.

CUA Connection to Annunciation House

CUA Assistant Campus Minister Amanda Ceraldi has spent time living and working at Annunciation House. There have also been other CUA graduates who have been long-term volunteers there.

STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS

Language Requirements

Conversational Spanish very helpful. It may be possible to volunteer with limited Spanish.

Background Check Required

A background check is required of all volunteers. This will be done through CUA Campus Ministry. International students are not able to apply to this program.

Does the site require a driver's license in order to transport guests/clients or use a vehicle during work?

License not required.

Student Minimum Age

Student volunteers are normally asked to be at least 20 years old, though there can be exceptions.

Special Requirements

Applicants are to complete an Annunciation House application in addition to the CUA Summer of Service application. Details and forms can be found on our website. This will only be done once accepted to the CUA Summer of Service program.

A valid driver's license may be helpful to drive agency vehicles and to run errands.

Student Attributes

Annunciation House is grounded in a Catholic spiritual tradition. Volunteers are accepted from all faith backgrounds (and those without a faith background), but they expect all volunteers to participate in community reflections, which may be of a spiritual nature, and in monthly staff gatherings that may involve prayer and Catholic Mass.

Dress Code

Modest dress that respects the conservative culture of many of our guests. No extremely tight or revealing clothing (e.g., short shorts, some athletic wear; men should wear shirts at all times). Comfortable work clothes are appropriate.

Participants should also bring at least one nicer outfit to wear when they are representing Annunciation House in the community, e.g. accompanying guests to court or other appointments.

ORGANIZATION DETAILS**Site Address**

815 Myrtle Ave.
El Paso, TX 79901-2620

Website

www.annunciationhouse.org