

Program Policies



Safety is a priority! We want participants to feel safe and be safe throughout the entire program. To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone, we ask all participants and staff to adhere to the following:

Community Expectations

1. **Rule of 3.** Participants should never be alone. At all times, participants must remain with at least two other participants. They should never leave the housing site, service site, or any program location without permission from their adult leader.
2. **Rule of 1.** Privacy and respect are essential. Only one person is permitted in a bed, toilet/shower stall, or changing tent at a time. Serve Boldly provides changing tents for participants to change clothes, and all participants and staff are expected to use them.
3. **Food & Beverage.** Food and beverage should remain in the designated dining and kitchen areas. Refillable water bottles may be carried throughout the day and throughout the facility unless otherwise noted.
4. **Dress Code.** T-shirts and closed-toe shoes are required at all service sites and in the kitchen. Participants should wear clothing that is appropriate for service, safety, and the work being performed.
5. **Cell phones.** Cell phone use will be limited during designated program times, including devotions, worship, meals, and service. Adult leaders are responsible for monitoring phone use and are encouraged to collect devices during these times to minimize distractions.
6. **Medications.** All medications must be stored in a locked container under the supervision of the group's adult leaders. Emergency medications, such as inhalers and EpiPens, should remain immediately accessible to the participant.
7. **Attitude of Gratitude.** Participants are living as a community and are expected to:
 - Treat one another with kindness, respect, and Christ-like love; every person is created in the image of God
 - Care for God's creation.
 - Respect our host site by leaving it cleaner than we found it.
 - Honor our service partners, the communities we serve, and every person we encounter
8. **Non-Negotiables.** Serve Boldly is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. The following behaviors are not permitted:
 - Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
 - Pranks or hazing
 - Possession or use of weapons
 - Possession or use of alcohol, marijuana or THC products, or illegal drugs.

If you see or experience behavior that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, tell your adult leader or a Serve Boldly staff member immediately.

Emergency Procedures

- **A steady ringing** of the bell means **gather in the designated storm shelter area.**
- **Intermittent ringing** of the bell means **seek a hiding place and stay quiet.**
- Fire alarms or adults yelling "fire" mean exiting the building quickly as a group.
- Participants may not sound the bell without permission from a Serve Boldly staff member or adult leader.
- First Aid Kit & Incident/Accident Report Forms are located in the kitchen.
- Serve Boldly staff will communicate the location of AEDs and/or fire extinguishers to adult leaders.
- Emergency procedures and phone numbers are posted outside the kitchen.
- If, at any point during your stay, a suspicious person or unwelcome guest is present in your housing space, please immediately notify Serve Boldly staff. Please make a mental note of clothing or other identifying factors along with the location/direction of travel.

Adult Supervision

Adult leaders (age 21+) are responsible for supervising & transporting their youth, managing behaviors, administering first aid & medication, adhering to Serve Boldly policies, and following the specific safety rules at the housing site.

Although 18-20 year-olds are legally adults, during Summer Youth Trips, Serve Boldly regards them as a 'youth participant' for programming with the following guidance to Group Leaders:

- They will stay with an assigned group for activities.
- They will have no direct supervisory responsibility over minors.
- They will have the same behavioral expectations as other youth.

Background Checks and Waivers

Serve Boldly will conduct a national (multi-site) criminal background and sex offender registry check on all staff and participants (adults or youth) who will be 18 years and older at the time of the trip. In addition, some service locations and shower sites may require additional waivers and background check forms to be completed before participation.

Adult Youth Ratio

Serve Boldly requires a minimum of **one adult leader (age 21+) for every 5 youth participants**, with a **minimum of 2 adult leaders required for youth groups of 5 or less**. In addition, we strongly encourage each group to **bring one extra adult leader beyond the required ratio.**

We know recruiting adult leaders can be challenging, but having an additional adult is essential when unexpected situations arise, such as a participant becoming ill or injured, needing medical care, transportation, or other emergencies. This allows one adult to care for the affected participant while the rest of the group continues participating in service, worship, and other scheduled activities with minimal disruption.

Adult Supervision

Adult leaders are responsible for supervising and transporting their youth, managing behaviors, monitoring showers, supervising sleeping spaces, administering first aid, managing medications, adhering to Serve Boldly policies, and following the community expectations.

Each group is responsible for enough adult leaders to supervise its sleeping space(s):

- Housing arrangements vary by location, and groups are not guaranteed a private room.
- Sleeping rooms may be assigned by group or gender identity, and groups should be prepared to share sleeping spaces with participants from other congregations.

Transportation

Each group will cover the costs associated with traveling to and from the service site, as well as transportation to and from housing, service organizations, showers, and evening program activities for their participants. This includes, but is not limited to, gas, parking fees, tolls, and other related expenses.

Our service and program locations are in urban areas that are not suitable for bus parking. Vehicles need to navigate easily and fit into small parking lots and structures. 12-passenger vans may be taller and may not fit readily in parking structures. **We recommend traveling by/renting minivans or large SUVs.** Groups must provide Serve Boldly with information on the types and numbers of vehicles by January.

Serve Boldly staff may ride with your group to service sites or other program locations when a seat with a functioning seat belt is available.

Serve Boldly staff are not permitted to transport participants in personal or program vehicles. Transportation is the responsibility of each group's approved drivers. All drivers must comply with the traffic laws and licensing requirements of the state(s) in which they are traveling.

Liability and Vehicle Insurance

For your protection, Serve Boldly requires proof of liability insurance and vehicle insurance from every group that registers for a trip. During the trip, you will not only be transporting your youth and adult leaders but may also be transporting the Serve Boldly staff.

Medication and Health Care

Each group is responsible for the health care needs of their participants and must bring their own First Aid Kit. In the event of an illness, injury, or medical emergency during the trip, the group's adult leaders are responsible for assessing the situation and securing appropriate medical care for the participant. We strongly recommend that each participant carry their own health insurance.

We also recommend that each group designate an adult leader responsible for managing medications for their group (adults and youth). The designated adult leader will tend to and log any health concerns that may arise during the trip.

- All prescription and over-the-counter medications should be stored in a portable, locked container once on-site at Serve Boldly. Sharing medication is not allowed. For the safety of all participants, we strongly encourage you to manage medication during your pre- and post-trip travel as well. EpiPens and rescue inhalers may stay with the individual for whom they are prescribed.
- Serve Boldly will provide portable, locked containers to store and manage access to medications when on-site (if needed), as well as phone numbers/addresses of local emergency medical facilities.
- Serve Boldly also provides a sample medical log for the designated adult leader to record medications given and any other health care that may need to be addressed.
- Serve Boldly recommends that participants bring medication in the original container and place medication containers inside a Ziploc bag labeled with the participant's first and last name.
- Serve Boldly provides a sample health form to help groups manage participants' medications and health information. Whether using Serve Boldly's form or an established form used by your group, each participant should complete a health history form before the trip; groups are responsible for bringing a hard copy of the form on the trip. We recommend that groups keep the hard copy in the locked medication container, AND that the Group Leader have an electronic copy of the scanned documents in case of an emergency while off-site.

Food & Dietary Accommodations

Serve Boldly provides meals for participants on both full-week and half-week trips.

Our menu is designed to be filling, nutritious, and appealing to youth while supporting the physical demands of daily service. Because meals are prepared for large groups, our menu is intentionally simple and streamlined.

Serve Boldly offers gluten-free, dairy-free, and vegetarian meal alternatives. These accommodations are provided based on the dietary information submitted during registration and are not available as à la carte menu options. While we make every effort to accommodate registered gluten-free, dairy-free, and vegetarian needs with alternatives, we are unable to provide highly customized or extensive menu choices for complex dietary preferences or restrictions.

Food Allergies

Serve Boldly's menu is peanut-free, and we do not intentionally purchase or serve foods containing peanuts.

However, Serve Boldly cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment. Meals may be prepared, packaged, or processed in facilities that also handle common allergens. In addition, host sites, service sites, restaurants, grocery stores, and community partners may have foods containing common allergens present.

Individuals with severe food allergies, medically necessary diets, or conditions requiring strict allergen avoidance should carefully evaluate these risks when deciding whether to participate in Serve Boldly. While we will make reasonable efforts to accommodate dietary needs, we cannot guarantee that exposure to allergens will not occur.

Sleeping Space

Adult leaders are responsible for supervising their group's sleeping room(s). **Supervision by two unrelated adults is required in any space where youth are sleeping.** All participants follow the rule of one person per bed for sleeping.

Sleeping areas may be assigned by group or gender identity, and groups should be prepared to share sleeping spaces with participants from other groups. If your group has a preference or requirement for separate sleeping arrangements, please contact Serve Boldly as early as possible. While we do our best to accommodate requests, separate sleeping spaces are not available at every host site.

Before your group's arrival, the Group Leader & Serve Boldly staff will communicate to determine the most appropriate sleeping space based on your group's size, accessibility needs, and the host site's available accommodations. Depending on the building's layout, your group may be assigned a classroom or a larger shared space such as a fellowship hall, gymnasium, or sanctuary. When multiple groups share a large sleeping area, Serve Boldly staff will establish clearly defined group spaces whenever possible using room layout, tables, privacy screens (when available), or other visual boundaries.

Please respect each group's designated sleeping area. Participants should not enter another group's sleeping space except in the event of an emergency or with permission from that group's leaders.

Privacy, Showers, and Changing Areas

All staff and participants are required to change in private; public nudity is not allowed. Changing tents are provided at all of our summer youth program locations. Staff are trained to respect and maintain participants' privacy and to reinforce a culture in which participants respect one another's privacy. Staff and participants follow the rule of one person per stall/tent for changing, bathrooms, and showering.

In most cases, showers are provided off-site at a local community center, YMCA, or school, and are offered once daily (excluding arrival and departure days). Adults/staff and youth will have separate shower times. Eighteen-year-old participants who are still part of a youth group should follow the group's shower schedule and expectations; however, they will also have a designated shower time separate from that of younger participants and adults.

During showers, adult leaders should remain nearby to supervise the group, but should respect participants' privacy by monitoring entrances/exits, not the shower area itself. All monitors will be observable and will not be one-on-one with youth participants. The use of any camera, cell phone, or other recording or photographic device in a changing area, shower, or restroom is strictly prohibited.

Each housing and shower location is unique. We seek housing spaces and facilities with accessibility features, including restrooms that align with participants' gender identities. Every effort will be made to choose a location that has an all-gender single-occupancy restroom and an ADA accessible restroom and shower. Serve Boldly strives to partner with facilities that offer semi-private and private spaces with access to changing rooms and showers.

A semi-private area is not separate from where other individuals are changing but offers the participant some privacy. For example, a bathroom stall with a door or an area created by a partition or drapery. A private area is a space separate from others where one can change/shower. This area would be fully enclosed by a door, and no one else would be able to enter without the participant's permission. This could be a single restroom or a family restroom where the participant can lock the door and change alone.

An exception to privacy exists only if the adult leader is a Personal Care Assistant of a participant with appropriate consent and documentation. Adult leaders or Serve Boldly staff will monitor changing areas and semi-private facilities in public spaces. Monitors will be observable and not one-on-one with youth participants. They will monitor the public space, both inside and outside the immediate changing area. The use of any recording or photographic devices inside a changing area, shower location, or restroom is strictly prohibited.

In rare instances or at specific locations, participants may be asked to enroll in a Planet Fitness Black Card membership before the trip (note: this cost is not covered by Serve Boldly). A Black Card membership includes access to any Planet Fitness location and allows one free guest per visit. Most locations require members to be at least 13 years old. Some locations may also offer a High School Summer Pass (free) for teens ages 14-19; policies can vary by franchise, so it's a good idea to check directly with the gym you plan to use.

A Planet Fitness location may also be used by groups who prefer it over shower facilities secured by Serve Boldly. This option can be especially helpful for groups traveling additional days before or after their Serve Boldly experience, as Serve Boldly provides access to showers only Monday through Thursday.

Lights Out

To help everyone stay rested and ready for each day of service, all participants are expected to observe the established lights out and quiet hours at the host site.

- All room lights should be turned off at the time designated.
- Participants should remain in their assigned sleeping areas and keep conversations and noise to a minimum.
- Participants should only leave their assigned sleeping area to use the restroom, respond to an emergency, or, with permission from their adult leader, do so.
- To avoid disrupting other groups, food deliveries should be scheduled during designated free time or before lights out. Please notify the Serve Boldly staff when you are expecting a delivery to ensure it does not interfere with the program or other participants' experience.
- Adult leaders are responsible for ensuring their group follows the lights-out and quiet-hours expectations.

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

Water's Edge Ministries is committed to creating spaces where every person is treated with dignity, respect, and care. We celebrate God's creation, including humanity in all its diversity, and strive to foster a community where everyone feels safe, welcomed, and valued.

Bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.

Bullying or harassment includes any written, verbal, electronic, visual, or physical behavior that a reasonable person would view as demeaning, intimidating, hostile, threatening, humiliating, or likely to cause physical or emotional harm. Discrimination includes unfair or unequal treatment based on a person's protected characteristics or identity.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome comments or conduct of a sexual nature, gender-based harassment, or any verbal, visual, electronic, or physical behavior of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Anyone who experiences, witnesses, or becomes aware of behaviors that violate this policy is encouraged to report it as soon as possible.

Witnesses are encouraged to safely intervene when appropriate and help create a culture of respect, kindness, and accountability.

Outside Food and Beverages

You are welcome to bring outside food and beverages or use food deliveries (DoorDash, Uber Eats, Grubhub, pizza delivery, etc.). Our housing sites have limited refrigerator and freezer space; this space is not available for personal food items your group brings on the trip. We recommend bringing a family-size cooler or two for snacks and beverages you wish to have available to your group. Groups are responsible for purchasing ice to keep the coolers cold. To help keep everyone safe, please do not bring snacks or other food items that contain peanuts.

Cell Phones and Smart Devices

Serve Boldly is designed to help participants build relationships, serve alongside one another, and fully engage with the community they are visiting. Cell phone use will be limited during designated program times, including devotions, worship, meals, and service. Adult leaders are responsible for monitoring phone use and are encouraged to collect devices during these times to minimize distractions.

We recommend the Group Leader bring a bag or container for youth cell phones and other smart devices during these designated times. While we encourage participants to take a sabbatical from their devices, the Group Leader ultimately decides whether youth have access to cell phones during travel, free time, or small-group time.

Cell phones and smart devices used for medical purposes, such as diabetic monitoring, are always permitted.

Money

Individuals may choose to bring a small amount of spending money for souvenirs; keep in mind that many of the sites you will visit are cashless.

Personal Belongings

We encourage participants to leave valuables at home. Serve Boldly is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

Communication with Home

We encourage Group Leaders to establish a communication plan with parents/guardians before the trip so everyone understands when and how updates will be shared throughout the week and how often parents/guardians may hear from their child or the group.

Parents/guardians who have questions/concerns, or who need to share important information while their child is on the trip, should contact their Group Leader directly.

Alcohol, Marijuana or THC Products, and Illegal Drugs

It is forbidden to consume, possess, and/or be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or THC products, or illegal drugs. Anyone (adults/youth) in possession of such items will be sent home immediately at the expense of the group/participant.

As a reminder, throughout your Serve Boldly experience, all prescription and non-prescription drugs of participants and staff will be kept in a locked portable container and in the custody of an adult leader of their group. A designated adult from each group is responsible for managing medications for their group (youth and adults).

Weapons

The safety and welfare of each participant are important to us. Anyone (adults/youth) in possession of knives, firearms, or other weapons will be sent home immediately at the expense of the group/participant.

Clothing and Footwear

Participants should wear clothing that is comfortable, modest, and appropriate for hands-on service. During the week, participants may encounter mud, paint, rain, heat, and other conditions that can be hard on clothing.

- T-shirts and closed-toe shoes are required at all service sites and in the kitchen.
- Clothing should be appropriate for the service being performed and allow participants to work safely.
- Tank tops are discouraged and not permitted at many service organizations due to safety, sanitation, and the nature of work being performed.
- A second pair of closed-toe shoes is strongly recommended, as shoes can become wet and muddy during service.

- Clothing displaying tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or THC products, or illegal drugs, or inappropriate, political, or suggestive images or language is not permitted.
- Some service organizations may require participants to wear pants.
- Bring a swimsuit and flip-flops or shower shoes, as they may be needed at some community shower facilities.
- We recommend bringing layers to prepare for changing weather conditions.

Damages

Groups are responsible for any damage to housing, shower facilities, or other program spaces, whether intentional or accidental. If damage occurs, the participant's group, not Serve Boldly, will be financially responsible for the cost of repair or replacement.