OPEN TABLE

FRESH FOOD. HEALTHY COMMUNITY.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION HANDBOOK
DEAR OPEN TABLE VOLUNTEER,

Thank you for giving us the gift of your time! Open Table volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. We rely on your energy, talent, and enthusiasm to support those in need. In a year at Open Table, 615 volunteers donated more than 17,200 hours of their time to support the 9,901 visits to our pantry and the 8,699 meals served. We couldn’t have done it without our volunteers. In fact, the time given by volunteers per year is equivalent to many full time employees! Because of our volunteers’ commitment to ending hunger, we are able to reduce our administrative costs and put more money into what really counts: our commitment to ending the indignity of hunger.

On behalf of Open Table, thank you for your time and commitment to providing healthy food choices in a welcoming environment.

JEANINE CALABRIA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OUR MISSION

At Open Table, we strive to end the indignity of Hunger.

We address hunger in our local community by providing healthy food in a welcoming environment while respecting the dignity of those served.

We achieve our mission by: serving community meals open to all, offering a wide variety of healthy food choices in our market, and engaging a team of committed and passionate staff and volunteers.

BY THE NUMBERS
IN A YEAR AT OPEN TABLE

9,901 Pantry Shopping Visits
645 Unique Households
507,077 Lbs. Food Distributed
8,699 Community Meals Served
615 Dedicated Volunteers
$50 Provides 1 Person a Week of Meals
$150 Fills a Cart for a Family of 4
$500 Feeds a Family for a Month
**THE BASICS**

**Openness**
We welcome all to our community dinners held in Concord and Maynard once a week. Additionally, Open Table does not ask for proof of income for guests to shop in our pantry. Our service area for the pantry is vast and includes 23 towns in Middlesex County. If a guest arrives who lives outside the service area, we meet their immediate need for food and help connect them to services closer to home. At a time when it seems that more divides us than unites us, Open Table’s dinner continues to be a welcoming place for all.

**What Brings People to Open Table?**
A need for community, unemployment, underemployment, medical issues, legal problems, death in the family, housing problems, divorce, accidents, illness & recent immigration. Stigma, access to transportation, and caregiving responsibilities are all barriers for guests to access our services.

**Food Insecurity**
Food insecurity refers to USDA’s measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household’s need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. In 2018, approximately 10% of households in Massachusetts faced food insecurity.

**Where Does Our Food Come From?**
* 65% Greater Boston Food Bank (supplied by farmers, MFAP, grocers & companies)
* 23% local farms & grocery stores
* 7% food drives & community donations

Open Table’s programs are funded through:
* 25% grants * 50% individual and group donations * 25% fundraising events

We take food that others make safely available to us. Open Table relies on its refrigerated truck and volunteers to pick up food from local farms and rescue food from local grocery stores. Additionally, volunteers spend 100s of hours processing and preparing our pantry offerings. Our In-Kind Donors include: Acton Coffee House, Bent-Stone Farm, Crosby’s Marketplace, Drumlin Farm / Mass. Audubon Society, Gaining Ground, Inc., Greater Boston Food Bank, Lovin’ Spoonfuls, Mill Iron Farm, Stop & Shop of Acton, Sudbury Farms, Trader Joe’s & Verrill Farms.
History of Open Table

1989 | Margie Goud Patterson and Robin Tordo participated in a World Hunger crop walk and were inspired to start a food relief program in Concord that included community dinners and a food pantry, located at The First Parish Church.

2006 | Open Table expanded and opened a second location at the Maynard Congregational Church. When the Maynard program and services outgrew the Congregational Church, Wellesley Management invited Open Table to use their space at Clock Tower Place in Maynard. Our partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank commenced.

2009 | A twelve-person advisory board was created to lend oversight to weekly operations.

2016 | Jeanine Calabria was hired as Open Table’s first Executive Director.

2017 | Open Table completed a capital campaign and raised over $700,000 to purchase and renovate 33 Main. Doors opened in August 2017.

2018 | The Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) granted funds to Open Table to purchase a refrigerated truck.

| A grant from the Middlesex Savings Charitable Foundation supported Open Table in developing a Strategic Plan for the future of the organization.

2019 | Open Table hosted Chopped for Charity, an anniversary fundraiser celebrating the organization’s 30 years of service to the community.
Community Dinners (Maynard and Concord)
Guests are served a healthy and nutritious meal. We offer two community dinners a week, one in Concord and one in Maynard. We serve about 200 individuals weekly and more than 8,500 meals per year.

Pantry Shopping (Maynard)
Pantry offerings include non-perishable groceries, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and other staples. Open Table’s fresh market pantry is modeled after a grocery store with shopping carts, reach-in refrigerators and freezers, and fresh produce.

Kids Corner: Open Table offers a place to play for children while parents are shopping.

Home Deliveries & Mobile Pantry
Open Table has identified home deliveries as a pressing, local area of need. We deliver groceries from our pantry every week and hope to expand this service.

Additionally, we will be further developing our mobile pantry program to target underserved communities in our service area.

Senior Pantry & Grab and Go Lunch (Maynard)
A senior pantry option is available every week for guests to shop at the market pantry. Open Table simultaneously provides a grab and go lunch for pantry guests to support a welcoming environment.
Volunteering with Open Table

Every week we need 180 volunteers to run our Pantry and Meal programs.

In general, we need volunteers between 10am and 7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays to support our community dinners and pantry operations. For volunteers who assist with those programs, we have created two hour shifts to help with pantry set up, food distribution, meal prep, meal service, or clean up. Volunteering at Open Table works best (and is often most rewarding) when you can volunteer for a consistent job on a consistent day. Our volunteer management system is designed to support this level of commitment. Since Open Table has limited paid staff, we count on our volunteers to make sure families that come to us can get food.

There are also many opportunities to volunteer behind the scenes with more flexibility of schedule. Volunteers serve on our board, communication, finance, fundraising and event planning committees. Additionally, you can contribute your time and talents completing projects for us from home, leadings outreaches, fundraising events and food drives.

We are always looking for are volunteers with skill sets in grant writing, PR, marketing, event planning, fundraising, community outreach, and speaking multiple languages.
SIGNING UP TO VOLUNTEER

REGISTRATION: The first step in volunteering at Open Table is filling out our registration form online at opentable.org. You can subsequently sign up for an orientation, through which you will learn about Open Table’s mission, values, history and areas where we need volunteers. When you leave orientation, you will have an idea of what job you would like to try and when your first opportunity will be to try that job. (See the appendix for a detailed guide to registering for shifts).

SCHEDULING: The Volunteer Gopher administrator will set up your calendar so that when you log in you will see all the opportunities that are available to you. There are some volunteer roles at Open Table that require further training. After a volunteer has completed at least four shifts and they are interested in this level of responsibility with Open Table, they should check with the program manager to begin the process of further training.

CANCELLING A SHIFT: You will receive a reminder e-mail about your scheduled shift with Open Table. If you are unable to attend, you can cancel through the Volunteer Gopher system. Additionally, if you are unable to make a shift with less than a week’s notice, notify your Program Manager as soon as possible.

LEADERSHIP TRACK: Every volunteer is encouraged to consider becoming a volunteer leader at Open Table. If you have volunteered in the same position for several months and would like to be promoted to a manager position, please let staff know. We are always looking for managers and pool coordinators. You will be invited to join monthly meetings and share ideas to improve our pantry and meal services. If you are interested in serving on our board, please speak to our Executive Director about the board selection process.
VOLUNTEER NEEDS

PANTRY
**PANTRY SET UP** - Process incoming food donations and stock pantry before distribution.
Shifts: Monday 10-12pm & 12-2pm | Tuesday 10-12pm | Thursday 10-12pm & 12-2pm

**PANTRY DISTRIBUTION** - Guide guests through the pantry and restock the pantry during distribution.
Shifts: Tuesday 12:30-3pm (Senior Pantry), 2:45-5pm & 4:30-6:30pm | Thursday 2:45-5pm & 4:30-6:30pm

**PANTRY CLEAN UP** - Tidy-up pantry space after clean up and sweep floors before closing.
Shifts: Tuesday 6:15-6:30pm | Thursday 6:15-6:30

**GUEST ADMINISTRATION** - Welcome guests into the pantry and manage the check in/check out system
Shifts: Tuesday 12:15-3pm, 2:45-5pm & 4:30-6:30pm | Thursday 2:45-5pm, 4:30-6:30pm

**SITE MANAGER** - Ensure a physically safe environment, trained in basic emergency and first aid.
Shifts: Tuesday 12:15-3pm, 2:45-5pm, 4:30-6:30pm | Thursday 2:45-5pm, 4:30-6:30pm

**KIDS TABLE** - Play with children while their parents and caregivers shop in the pantry.
Shifts: Tuesday 12:30-3pm, 2:45-5pm & 4:30-6:30pm | Thursday 2:45-5pm & 4:30-6:30pm

FOOD RESCUE
**FOOD RESCUE PICK UP** - Drive to local farms or grocery stores to pick up food for Open Table programs.
Shifts: Mornings throughout the week.

SAVE OUR SURPLUS (SOS)
**COOKING CREW** - Prepare healthy to-go meals for pantry distribution.
Shifts: Tuesday 11am-1:15pm
COMMUNITY DINNERS

Cooking Crew - Chop vegetables and assist the head chef with meal preparations.
Maynard: Monday 11am-1:15pm, 3:30-5:30pm | Concord: Thursday 2:30pm

Site Manager/Greeter - Act as host and provide oversight in case of emergency.
Maynard: Monday 5-7pm | Concord: Thursday 5-6:30pm

Dinner Manager - Lead the team of servers during the meal.
Maynard: Monday 5:30-8pm | Concord: Thursday 5:15-6:30pm

Dinner Setup - Arrange the community dinner tables and chairs, set the tables for guests.
Maynard: Monday 4-5:15pm

Serving Crew - Serve our three course meals to guests restaurant style at the table.
Maynard: Monday 5:30-8pm | Concord: Thursday 5:15pm

Dishwashing - Clean the cooking utensils, plates, etc. from a community meal.
Maynard: Monday 5:30-8pm | Concord: Thursday 6:15pm

Dinner Service Laundry - Bring aprons home, wash them, and return them by Thursday.
Maynard: Monday 7:30pm

COMMITTEES

Communications Committee - Produce all communications and PR materials.
Meetings: The 2nd Tuesday of the Month at 10am

Fundraising Committee - Work to ensure Open Table raises necessary operations funds.
Meetings: The 3rd Wednesday of the Month at 7pm

Grant Writing Committee - Write grants to solicit funds for operational and program expenses.

Event Planning Committee - Coordinate logistical and behind the scenes work for special events.

SEASONAL OPPORTUNITIES

April - Spring Cleaning
May - Process Postal Worker Food Drive, Walk for Hunger
September - Ride for Food
October - Maynard Fest, Maynard Trick or Treat, Crop Walk
November - Process Thanksgiving Food Drive, Turkey Distribution, Turkey Trot, Holiday Decorations
December - Maynard Sip and Stroll

ON YOUR OWN TIME

* Conduct a food drive
* Sponsor a community dinner
* Prepare centerpieces for dinners
* Conduct a cleaning supplies drive
* Pack kids bags
* Special project as needed
GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

* Regular Group Shifts - Small businesses and faith groups can make a monthly commitment to our pantry or serving shifts! Get to know our guests, volunteers and staff -- it’s a win-win for everyone! One person from your group acts as point person to coordinate the group (3-7 people).

* Fun & Fitness Lunch Hour - From 12-2pm on Mondays & Thursdays, unload our truck from the Greater Boston Food Bank then go back to work having completed your weight lifting and community service. Open Table will provide you with lunch when you let us know in advance.

* Community Drop Off Center - Volunteer through our Concord location on Everett Street. We’re looking for regular civic/community groups who can sign up for one Saturday afternoon a month to receive food drives and food donations from the community, then sort, inventory and weigh all donations. (3-7 people).

* SOS Cooking Teams - Save Our Surplus (SOS) is a fun team-building event for a company or organization. SOS Teams help us rescue food through cooking prepared meals for our pantry. Regular shifts are available on Monday from 11am-1:15pm. Evening cooking events are also possible by special arrangement (6 people max.).

* Sponsor a Community Dinner - Sports teams, The Rotary Club, and small businesses have all enjoyed sponsoring a dinner. You can shop, cook, serve, or just donate the cost of the meal (7-15 people).

* Special Saturday Work Days - Volunteer efforts enable Open Table to complete many, essential tasks. Groups serve us through cleaning, food drive sorting, window painting, etc. Youth groups, sports teams and alumni groups are welcome. Work Days are scheduled a month in advance (7-15 people).

* Annual Events - Volunteer opportunities abound at large annual events, including the Ride for Food in September, Thanksgiving and Letter Carriers Food Drives, and the Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day (10-20 people).

* Other Special Events - Hosting various events enables us to fundraiser and reach out to the community. Volunteers are needed at the Maynard Fest, large fundraisers (including bi-annual Chopped for Charity) and Sip and Stroll (10-20 people).
Volunteer Attire
Dress casually and be prepared to get messy. Please leave purses, jewelry, and other valuables at home or locked in your car. Open Table will not be responsible for any missing personal belongings. We have a lost and found in the volunteer closet.

Volunteers Under the Age of 18
Open Table welcomes participation of kids 14 and under through our community donations programs. Check out our website for information about organizing food drives and creating kids bags. Unfortunately there are few other opportunities for kids to volunteer at Open Table when we are open due to safety concerns. High School students (including the summer before High School) are welcome to volunteer at Open Table. You must be 16 and older to work in the Kitchen.

Community Service
If you are choosing to serve your community service hours at Open Table, please notify your Program Manager on your first shift and they will sign off on your hours as you complete them. If you are completing your court ordered community service you must coordinate directly with the Volunteer Coordinator before volunteering at Open Table.

Snow Days
Open Table will close when Maynard’s public schools are closed. If you are scheduled to work that day, you will be notified by text or email that we are closed. We will also post our closings on our website.

Volunteer Feedback
We encourage open feedback about your volunteer experience with us. You can speak directly with any Program Manager or send comments by email to: volunteer@opentable.org. Periodically we also solicit volunteer feedback in a formal manner through interviews or surveys. We hope you enjoy your volunteer experience and find your time serving both fruitful and meaningful.
SAFE & WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Open Table is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for our community. Our Official Statement of Respect: We proudly commit to treating everyone with both dignity and respect, and asks you to commit to the same. Please help us by keeping our facility clean and well cared for.

IN SERVICE OF THIS GOAL:
Open Table is an alcohol free environment.
Open Table is a smoke free environment. Smoking is prohibited on Open Table property.
Open Table believes that everyone has a role in stewarding care and maintenance of our facility.

The Board of Health requires that all volunteers and staff abide by the following:
* If you have had a fever within the past 7 days, you cannot volunteer.
* Volunteers must wash their hands before handling food items and after visiting the restroom or after cell phone use.
* Have your hair tied back or wear a hat (provided) when working with food.
* Wear closed-toed shoes when volunteering.

Please immediately report any safety hazards you see to the Site Manager.
Do not attempt to clean up any bodily fluids or spills without first consulting with the Site Manager.
All accidents and injuries are to be reported.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: Our site managers are trained to handle medical needs. Do not administer medications to guests. By State Law, no one will be held liable if they administer Narcan. Open Table does not keep Narcan on site. In case we need to evacuate the building, as a volunteer your responsibility is to remove yourself from the premises as soon as possible. Staff will manage guest mobility issues. The emergency meeting location is in the Emerson Clinic parking lot.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING AT OPEN TABLE:
* We strive to be as green as we can. We rescue food and also recycle and compost 90% of our waste.
* Everybody has something to contribute to our community.
* We encourage guests to volunteer with us.
* We are food connectors, not food police.
* You can guide guests around food choices in our pantry but not dictate.
* Do not remove items from a guests cart without their permission.
* When serving meals, we understand there are many food choices that we offer and respect.
* We are food connectors, not social workers.
* We engage with guests in a positive way while maintaining professional boundaries. This includes, not initiating touch or asking personal questions.
* We respectfully respond when guests want to share information about their lives and needs but do not initiate these conversations or deepen the conversation. Use discretion when sharing information about yourself. Your role is to help distribute food in a friendly manner.
* Do say, “You look nice, hope you are having a nice day” and not “Oh, how are your cancer treatments going?” while guests are walking into the pantry. More in depth conversations slow down our food distribution processes and lend towards a perception of bias or favoritism.

RULES ABOUT INTERACTING WITH GUESTS:
* Never give a guest money, employ a guest, or purchase goods or services from a guest.
* Do not solicit funds from guests.
* Never give a guest additional food or resources without checking with your program manager. We strive to maintain equitable access to resources.
* Never take pictures of a guest.
* Do not initiate physical contact with guests or other volunteers. You can engage in the following contact with a guest in a public space: shaking hands, high fives, fist bump, crazy secret handshake greetings.

INTERACTING WITH KIDS:
Kids need to stay in the Kids Corner or with their parents. Never allow a situation where you are alone with a child. Always remain in the front waiting area with the child. If he or she is having difficulties, work with other volunteers to ensure that the child remains supervised while seeking out their caregiver. Never take a child to the bathroom, into the kitchen, or pantry. Never have a child sit in your lap.
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Open Table will not share specific, detailed information about guests, donors, or volunteers with external parties.

A volunteer’s name and the fact that they are affiliated with Open Table is not considered confidential and may be used in public relations material. Volunteers may opt out by filling out the Personal Information Form.

If you see a guest at Open Table from your outside life, follow the guest’s cues about acknowledging your relationship. If the guest greets you openly, respond in kind. If the guest ignores you, do not engage them apart from fulfilling your volunteer duties.

Open Table volunteers should not discuss the specifics of pantry guests outside of Open Table. You may discuss your experiences, thoughts and feelings with other people in your lives. It is a breach of confidentiality if you tell others specifically who you interacted with. (It is not OK to go home and say, “Guess what Mom! I saw Sarah’s dad at the Pantry!”)

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Open Table shall not discriminate against any volunteer based on race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, national origin, genetics, or veteran status.

Open Table will not tolerate or allow:
- Sexual Harassment.
- Circulation of written materials or pictures degrading populations listed above.
- Verbal Abuse or insults directed at others.

If a person engages in prohibited behaviors, Open Table reserves the right to ban that person from all activities related to Open Table.

REPORTING DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT:
If you have experienced discrimination or harassment at Open Table, you can report it to our Executive Director, Jeanine Calabria at executivedirector@opentable.org