BCT in person training to replace https://sati.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/SERVICE-WORK-4.pdf

Volunteer Service Work: The Heart of the Buddhist Chaplaincy Training

Volunteer service is one of the most meaningful and essential components of this training. It is where learning comes alive. Through direct service, participants have the opportunity to put classroom teachings into practice, deepen their skills in offering spiritual care, and return to class with real-world experiences that enrich both their own learning and that of the entire cohort.

Because volunteer service is such an integral part of the training, participants are strongly encouraged to begin exploring placement opportunities as soon as they are accepted into the training. The goal is to secure and begin a placement of approximately 10 hours per month during the first month of training whenever possible.

Many institutions require an application process, background check, and volunteer orientation before participants can begin serving. These requirements often take two to three months to complete, making early planning essential for a successful training experience.

To support participants in finding meaningful placements, we have compiled a list of opportunities in the Bay Area, including organizations where previous participants have served. Over the years, BCT participants have completed volunteer service in a wide range of settings, including hospitals, hospices, social service agencies, prisons and jails, and Buddhist sanghas and other faith communities.

While every setting offers unique opportunities for growth, hospital and correctional environments have consistently provided some of the most comprehensive and transformative training experiences. These settings invite chaplains to cultivate presence, compassion, resilience, and skill in serving people during times of profound vulnerability.

Buddhist chaplains in the San Francisco Bay Area serve in a variety of non-traditional institutional settings, offering spiritual and emotional care to individuals facing illness, loss, incarceration, recovery, and other life challenges. Key settings include:

- Hospitals & Hospice Centers: Chaplains serve at major medical facilities like UCSF Medical Center, San Francisco General Hospital (via Sojourn Chaplaincy, listed below)
- Correctional Institutions: Chaplains and practitioners work within the state prison system and county facilities, such as the Santa Clara County Jails, to provide mindfulness-based trauma healing and restorative justice programs.
- Community & Recovery Support Groups: Providers and volunteers lead specialized "Buddhism and Recovery" groups and end-of-life care workshops at wellness clinics and centers throughout the region.
- Community chaplaincy is deeply needed across the San Francisco Bay Area, where many people are seeking connection, support, and compassionate care during times of change and challenge. By meeting people where they are—in neighborhoods, workplaces, hospitals, and public spaces—community chaplains help foster hope, belonging, and resilience. Their presence strengthens the social fabric of our communities and reminds people that they are seen, valued, and supported. Community chaplaincy is a form of spiritual and emotional care that operates outside the walls of traditional faith groups and the like. These chaplains serve

as non-judgmental, confidential supports within everyday public spaces—such as schools, political demonstrations, businesses, care shelters, and local neighborhoods.

Your unique talents and passions are vital to your learning. Review the service opportunities below to discover your perfect fit! No matter where you begin, your contribution creates a powerful, lasting impact.

We invite you to explore the diverse volunteer opportunities listed below. Discovering where you are called to serve is a vital first step. To ensure you find the most rewarding path, please seek out consultation with faculty as you proceed.

Sojourn Chaplaincy
Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center
https://sojournchaplaincy.org/learn-care/2026training/

San Francisco Zen Center
Community outreach
Ellen Simpson outreach@sfzc.org

Stanford Hospital
Rev. Mariah Callison

Spiritual Care Services: 650-723-5101
mcallison@stanfordhealthcare.org

Washington Corrections Center (Shelton, WA)
Chaplain Shawn Carnahan

Community Partnership Program/Volunteer Coordinator:
-Ms. Katrina Jackson (Kljackson@DOC1.WA.GOV).
-Jeff Miles (mountainwayzen@yahoo.com)

Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula
Laine Julian
Laine.Julian@chomp.org
626-272-9173

SF Night Ministry
(listening on the streets, over the phone, and in sacred community spaces.
https://www.sfnightministry.org/i-want-to-support#volunteer
Rev. Ben DeShazo-Couchot
volunteer@sfnightministry.org

San Mateo County Jail (through a non-profit called Service League)
https://serviceleague.org/how-to-help/volunteer.html
Jeremy Seisa: jseisa@serviceleague.org

San Jose Prison Dharma (several locations)
Ram Appalaraju
ram.appalaraju@gmail.com

UC Davis Medical Center
Terry Long
mrlong@health.ucdavis.edu

Insight World Aid (Silicon Valley)
https://insightworldaid.org/volunteer-with-iwa/
Community Programs, i.e. Lunch Bag Service for Homeless Shelters

Kaiser Hospice (SF)
Leah.C.Hellerstein@kp.org

By the Bay Health Larkspur Marin
Carol Watts cwatts@bythebayhealth.org

Faith In Action (Bay Area)
Bay Area
https://faithinaction.org/federation/faith-in-action-bay-area/

Big Heart City (Santa Cruz)
info@bigheartcity.org
Food Pantry in SF
https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/953367238021/false#/invitation
Prison Penpal program

Santa Clara Valley Medical Center
Father Maurice Igboerika TP
408-442-9877 maurice.igboerika@hhs.sccvgov.org
Pastor Rob Walter TP
408-591-0271

The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Action
a grassroots, member-led, statewide community organization working with more than 15,000 members across California
https://www.acceaction.org/about

Bay Resistance a grassroots, nonviolent network of community organizations, labor unions, and neighborhood groups in the San Francisco Bay Area
https://www.bayresistance.org/about

Hands On Bay Area
connects companies and people with volunteer projects through a network of local nonprofits and schools in need.
https://www.handsonbayarea.org/

Points of Light makes volunteerism more accessible, inclusive and impactful.
https://www.pointsoflight.org/our-mission/