

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Can I trust the people I will be connecting with?**

Yes, all Bridging the Bayous Timebank members have had nationwide background/sex offender registry checks run on them. However, for the first time meeting, it is best to meet a Timebank member you don't know in a public location in order to get a feel as to whether you feel comfortable exchanging time with them or not.

## **After I join, does that mean people will be constantly calling me to do work for them?**

No. Each Timebank Member has total control as to how often they will volunteer. All requests or offers are written onto the online software for the membership to view. Members then view that request/offer for assistance and decide for themselves if they would like to respond to it or not. Communications between other members only take place after they respond to a request/offer.

## **Are there any volunteer positions that would not count as Timebank Hours?**

1. Timebank Hours can only be earned if the place/person you are volunteering for is also a Timebank Member.
2. Timebank Hours cannot be earned when volunteering in any part of the Mass or Sacramental Ceremony (such as bringing Eucharist to the homebound, Confirmation, First Communion, Marriage, etc.) However, Any church volunteer work outside of the Mass will count (money counters, CCD Teachers/monitors, church decorators, etc.)
3. Service hours earned by students for school or church requirements should not count as Timebank Hours as the children need to be taught to give of themselves without expecting something in return.

## **Are there any categories or activities that are not allowed within the Timebank?**

1. Yes, the following categories/activities will not be allowed within Bridging the Bayous Timebank:
  - a. Childcare
  - b. Any type of Transportation
  - c. Any work involving the use of a tall ladder or scaffolding
  - d. Electrical and plumbing work
2. Some categories will be limited as to the extent they can be used:
  - a. Any service that normally requires the worker to be certified and licensed in their field will only be allowed if the Timebank Member can present to another Timebank Member their certifications/license.

## **How can I be sure the Bridging the Bayous Timebank Member has the skills and abilities to do the job right?**

If the job needed requires a certain specialized certification or license, ask the Bridging the Bayous Timebank Member to present those certifications/licenses to you.

Ask for references before agreeing to accept their offer of help.

Check any endorsements other Bridging the Bayous Timebank Members have posted on the Member's personal page.

## **Do Timebank Hours expire?**

Timebank Hours earned by active members have no expiration date as long as Bridging the Bayous Timebank is in operation.

## **Am I able to donate/transfer my Timebank Hours to members who need them?**

Bridging the Bayous Timebank members are encouraged to PROVIDE AND RECEIVE to fully appreciate and maximize the effectiveness of the program. However, excess Timebank Hours can be donated/transferred to other members or to the Share Bank. Donations and transfers can be made using normal exchange reporting methods. You may split your donation in any manner that you choose; just be sure to clearly designate your donation.

## **What do I do if someone falsely deposits or withdraws Timebank Hours?**

Although Bridging the Bayous Timebank is built on mutual respect and trust, mistakes do happen. If you believe your account balance is incorrect and you believe Timebank Hours have been falsely deposited or withdrawn, first contact the member you believe made the error. If you are unable to resolve the issue member to member, please contact the Timebank Coordinator in writing: (Jennifer Gaudet: [jgaudet@htdiocese.org](mailto:jgaudet@htdiocese.org)).

## **Can I rely on Bridging the Bayous to meet my emergency needs?**

Bridging the Bayous Timebank is not designed to respond to emergency needs. Member responses to your requests will vary. There may be times when an exchange can take place within 24 hours, while other times it may take 2 weeks (or longer) to coordinate an exchange.

## **How do I communicate changes in my contact information with members?**

Please report any changes to your name, mailing address, phone number, email address, service offers, etc. in your Bridging the Bayous Timebank member account.

## **What if I am unavailable to provide services for a period of time?**

If you will be unable to perform services for several weeks, please edit your profile and add a notation about your lack of availability.

## **What if I don't have time for volunteering? Isn't this just one more thing that's going to eat up my extra time?**

Many of the services people exchange in a Timebank are the types of things they are already doing every day. For example, those of us who have children are already cooking for them and helping them with their schoolwork - among other things. Cooking an extra portion of food for someone down the street who is housebound, picking up your neighbor's dog while going out to walk your own, or helping the child down the street with his homework doesn't add work to your day. Or, if you have a dog and take it for a walk every day, why not pick up your neighbor's dog along the way?

People who volunteer for their church can earn Timebank Hours when volunteering as Pastoral Council Members, CCD Teachers, money counters, assisting with Vacation Bible School, etc. However, Timebank Hours cannot be earned while volunteering in any part of the Mass or Sacramental ceremonies (confirmation, bringing Eucharist to the homebound, First Communion, Marriage, etc.)

For professionals like doctors, lawyers and business people, Timebanking is a way to give back to your community without having to go someplace else on someone else's schedule. For example, you can just set aside 10% of your appointment calendar for Timebank members.

Even better, Timebanking helps you gain extra time because down the road. You can spend the Timebank Hours you've earned and have someone else do something for you that you can't fit into your schedule or simply don't know how to do!

## **Can Businesses join?**

**Yes!** Any business or non-profit organization that has something to offer the community free of charge (such as meeting rooms, boats for bayou clean-ups, tents for school functions, employees for volunteer work, etc.) can earn hours for every hour their

equipment/employees volunteer their time. The hours earned can then be used in one of two ways:

- a. The hours can be donated to a particular family the business/organization may know that is in need or donated to the Bridging the Bayous Share Bank (that assists elderly or severely disabled Timebank Members), or
- b. The hours can be used to ask Bridging the Bayous Timebank Members to assist the business/organization with a need they may have (example: assistance with handing out flyers for a sale or help with fundraising activities.)

**Do my Timebank Hours have a cash value and can I redeem them for cash?**

Timebank Hours have no cash value and are not redeemable for cash.

**Can you buy, trade, or sell things with Timebank Hours?**

Bridging the Bayous Timebank does not allow any buying, trading, or selling of Timebank Hours in exchange of goods or services. The exchange of Timebank Hours is not considered to be a taxable transaction by the IRS while the buying, selling or trading of goods and services is. There is no equivalency between a Timebank Hour and regular dollar value in an exchange of goods or services.

**Can people cheat?**

Whenever one person earns Timebank Hours, there is a corresponding withdrawal for the same amount in someone else's account. This makes it pretty easy to know if someone is cheating or not. No one is anonymous in a Timebank, so people don't cheat. Bridging the Bayous Timebank members rely on the trust and shared moral values of its members to be of service to one another.