

Program Assurances June 2006

The following assurances have been based upon “Proposed Statewide Emergency Homeless Shelter Standards” developed by the Homeless Input Committee of the Housing Resources Commission Office of Homelessness & Emergency Assistance. They have been adapted to include all homeless shelters and services funded through the Housing Resources Commission.

All facilities and programs funded by the State of Rhode Island must provide humane care that preserves individual dignity of every man, woman and child who receives shelter and/or services. Contractors will enable clients to have access to basic needs and reasonable security.

A. FOOD AND NUTRITION

Homeless service entities providing food services will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Facilities will develop and implement guidelines for safe food storage, preparation, and clean up of all food preparation areas.

Facilities should ensure that meals provide adequate nutrition, following the current USDA Food Pyramid.

B. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The facility shall comply with applicable local/state zoning, building, electrical, plumbing, fire, environmental, health and safety codes.

The facility shall utilize spaces in which furniture, appliances, heating/cooling units, walls, floors, roof, windows, lighting and plumbing are safe and fit for their intended purpose.

The facility will be clean and in good repair.

Facilities will provide an environment free from all pests.

Shelters will provide a bed, mat or crib for each guest except in extenuating “overflow” conditions and based on size and/or type of shelter. The shelter will provide and maintain safe sleeping areas. All beds, cots and cribs will meet current safety standards and be in good working condition.

The shelter will provide and maintain clean and safe restroom facilities to include toilets, sinks and showers/bathtubs.

The shelter will make provision for clean linens and towels for each client.

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Facilities and programs will refer all clients who are unable to be served to other agencies.

The shelter will provide for safety and security including the development and maintenance of an emergency manual which outlines:

- Emergency procedures for disaster and/or violence related evacuation;
- Accountability for all persons in case of an emergency;
- Procedures for individual emergencies including health or mental health emergencies;
- Emergency contacts and phone numbers;
- Location of utility shutoff sites such as water, electric and gas.

Regular safety inspections and evacuation drills shall be conducted.

C. OPENING/ CLOSING TIMES

Shelters not operating on a 24-hour basis will create and implement a policy for extension of their operating hours during inclement weather and during designated emergency situations including, but not limited to severe weather, natural disasters and other such situations as designated by governmental authorities.

Shelter policies will allow residents who are employed to leave for and return from work without penalty.

D. STAFF

Facilities and programs will have a table of organization of all paid staff. There will be written position descriptions for each position type, which includes job responsibilities and qualifications.

Programs will have sufficient trained staff (either paid or volunteer) on-site and available during all hours in which clients occupy the premises, unless individual secured units are provided.

The contractor will provide an ongoing training program for staff either directly or through cooperating agencies. Staff training will include but not be limited to:

- a. Program operation
- b. Agency operating procedures
- c. Emergency procedures as outlined in Section B. above
- d. Infection control policy and procedures
- e. Non-violent crisis intervention techniques
- f. First aid
- g. CPR

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- h. Emergency procedures for medical/psychiatric crises
- i. Referral procedures to relevant community resources
- j. Other training relevant to the work to be performed

The contractor will have written standards for ethical conduct of staff in relationship to clients of the program, which include but are not limited to:

- a. Confidentiality
- b. Respect for clients
- c. Prohibition of borrowing and lending of money
- d. Prohibition of sexual contact and exploitation
- e. Prohibition of drug or alcohol use

The shelter will provide appropriate professional supervision to all paid staff and volunteers on a regular basis. Direct supervision shall be provided for all interns and new staff, either paid or volunteer, with periodic evaluations of their performance.

E. RESIDENTS RIGHTS/ RESPONSIBILITIES

The contractor will promote mutual respect among staff and clients.

Clients will be protected from threats or intimidation by staff or other program participants.

Shelter residents will not be denied access to their own medications and/or appropriate medical treatment.

In shelter and residential programs, the contractor will create a process that provides for input into facility operations on an ongoing basis. Open meetings shall be held at least once per month.

Shelters and residential programs will develop and implement a set of house rules and resident rights and responsibilities regarding daily operations. These standard house rules/guidelines shall include but are not limited to requirements for resident's participation, safety and security procedures, use of drugs and alcohol, curfews, and statement of the shelter's non-violence policy. Upon admission into the program, these rules shall be reviewed with all clients and a written copy must be provided. They must also be conspicuously posted.

No shelter will deny access to any person without referral to Crossroads Rhode Island for temporary accommodation and a record must be kept by the initial shelter of that turn-away.

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If an individual arrives at the shelter in a state of intoxication that may endanger the safety of that person or others, shelter staff will call Medical Rescue, and the Emergency Personnel will determine whether the individual is in need of medical attention.

If program fees are charged, the fee will not be higher 30% of the resident's income. This provision will not be construed to prevent savings plans at higher percentages if funds are returned to residents upon exit. Overnight shelters will not charge any fees.

F. CASE MANAGEMENT

Shelters and residential programs will provide case management services to clients, or insure that clients have access to these services through another agency. The shelter will develop and implement a set of written policies and procedures that clearly delineate the provision of case management services to include what specific services are to be provided, how they are to be provided, and by whom.

Information about how to access all case management services will be posted conspicuously in each facility.

Programs will maintain confidential records to document services and referrals provided to each resident.

Night-to-night shelters will post information designed to help residents access public assistance, job search, housing, health, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and food/soup kitchen resources.

G. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Client rights and responsibilities will include a mechanism for residents to present suggestions or grievances. The grievance procedure shall include provisions for appeal. A copy of the document specifying the outcome of the grievance and the results of any appeal will be available to the client and/or their authorized representative.

A form will be available to file grievances related to program or staff. Such grievances should be responded to in a timely manner and in writing, so a record can be kept of the results of the grievance.

Shelter Client Grievance Procedures:

- a. Upon admittance to a program, staff will review written list of rules, rights (including grievance procedure), and responsibilities with resident.
- b. Rules are to be posted in the facility.
- c. Community meetings may be held to clarify/modify rules and share common concerns.

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Grievance Procedure Sequence:

- a. The grievance is filed with a designated person within the agency.
- b. If the grievance is not resolved to the client's satisfaction, it will go up the line in the program to the chief administrator.
- c. If a grievance is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction, the resident may present the grievance to a 3-person external review committee. This committee will consist of: one person who is currently or formerly homeless and who has participated in the Homeless Input Committee on a regular basis; one person who works in homeless services (but does not work in the affected agency); and the chair of the Homeless Input Committee of the Office of Homelessness or the person whom the Chair designates. The Chair will be responsible for convening the committee, and for choosing the committee's other two members.

If a client does not feel comfortable making a grievance internally, the client may communicate with an advocacy organization such as People to End Homelessness. The organization will arrange for a volunteer advocate to assist the client in making his or her grievance.

Any person who is barred for more than a six-month period may make an appeal six months from the date of his or her discharge, and again every six months after that.

Contractor

Date

Housing Resources Commission

Date