



## **Palm Beach County Continuum of Care**

### **Emergency Shelter Standards of Care**



## I. INTRODUCTION

Emergency Shelter Standards maintain that homeless individuals and families living in emergency housing are ensured:

- a safe environment
- housing focused case management
- rapid access to Permanent Housing
- treatment with dignity and respect
- placement of all family members together
- service delivery regardless of presenting barriers
- provision of housing and related services without regard to race, color, religion, disability, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information.
- the right to dress in accordance with the gender with which they self-identify
- receive services/support consistent with their self-identified gender

**Gender minorities** may include individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression may be different from their assigned gender at birth irrespective of physical appearance, surgical status, or documentation of identity.

## II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### **Housing Focused Service Delivery Components Provided in Emergency Shelter**

Homelessness is first and foremost a housing problem and should be treated as such. As such, the guiding principle of emergency shelter services is permanent housing. The principal components of Housing Focused Service Delivery in Emergency Shelter are:

- ***Housing, Resource, and Support Services Assessment*** which focuses on housing needs, preferences, and barriers; resource acquisition (e.g., entitlements); and identification of services needed to sustain housing
- ***Housing placement assistance*** including housing location and placement; financial assistance with housing costs (e.g., security deposit, first month's rent, move-in and utilities connection, short- or long-term housing subsidies); advocacy and assistance in addressing housing barriers (e.g., poor credit history or debt, prior eviction, criminal conviction)
- ***Case management services*** (frequently time-limited) specifically focused on obtaining and sustaining permanent housing

### **Other Guiding Principals**

The health and safety of clients, volunteers and staff is of the highest importance in each Emergency Housing facility. Training, policies, procedures and regular maintenance are intended to encourage, improve and maintain the health and safety of all people residing, volunteering and working in the emergency housing.

In order to provide effective emergency housing programs and services, emergency housing clients should be afforded the opportunity to have a voice in service provision, program planning, and policy development.

Emergency housing programs are part of a larger network of homeless services and agencies. Collaboration within this network is important to ensure effective and co-coordinated services.

People who are homeless should be stabilized in permanent housing as quickly as possible and connected to resources necessary to sustain that housing.

Case Managers will meet at least weekly with their clients as well as maintain phone contact as they progress towards obtaining permanent housing.

Clients shall be moved into housing as rapidly as possible.

Compliance with the Emergency Housing Standards will be a contract requirement and apply to all contracted emergency housing providers/facilities.

### **III. CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Emergency Shelter Staff must review with all Clients, the “Rights and Responsibilities and Grievance Procedures” during the initial intake and housing orientation. Staff must also review specific house rules which may include the following:

1. Smoking (where, when)
2. Curfew hours/overnight absences
3. Safety Issues
4. Authorized household members
5. Unauthorized visitors
6. Responsibility for personal belongings
7. Program/treatment related issues
8. Medication- storage and dispensing
9. Expectations of participation in treatment
10. Meals
11. House meetings
12. Other rules: curfew, phone use, lights out, and television/radio use (for Family emergency housings) parental responsibility for children at all times, etc.

After the Client has read (or been provided assistance to read) the “Clients Rights and Responsibilities and Grievance Procedures”, consumers must sign the document. One copy must be given to the Client and the second must be kept on file.

#### **IV. BASIC STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTERS**

##### **ADMINISTRATION**

1. The shelter operated by a non-profit organization, must be recognized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
2. The shelter shall not require clients to participate in religious services or other forms of religious expression.
3. The Agency's Board of Directors shall meet at least on a regular basis.
4. The shelter shall have a secure storage space for confidential documents relating to clients and personnel.
5. The shelter shall develop -and implement procedures to ensure the confidentiality of records pertaining to any individuals provided family violence prevention or treatment services.
6. The shelter shall have a policy manual which includes the shelter's purpose, population served, program description, non-discrimination policy and confidentiality statement.
7. The shelter shall provide for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the services offered, at least annually.

##### **PERSONNEL**

1. The shelter shall have a Organizational Chart of all paid staff working in the shelter. There shall be written position descriptions for each position type, which includes job responsibilities and qualifications.
2. The shelter shall have trained, on-site staff coverage during all hours the shelter is open to residents, unless individual secured units are provided.
3. All shelter staff shall receive training in at least the following:
  - a. emergency evacuation procedures
  - b. agency operating procedures
  - c. first aid procedures
  - d. CPR
  - e. AED
  - f. SPDAT Certification
4. All direct service staff shall receive additional training in at least the following:
  - a. de-escalation training;
  - b. referral procedures to relevant community resources
  - c. Cultural Competency
5. Emergency Shelter Providers must have written Policies and Procedures that include:
  - A. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**  
Written drug and alcohol policies for its employees that include the following:
    - a. Drug and alcohol free workplace
    - b. Remediation for the use and/or distribution of illegal substances

## **B. CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS AND CHILD ABUSE CLEARANCES**

**Single Adult Providers:** All program staff and volunteers must obtain Level 2 criminal record checks *prior to hire and at five (5) year intervals thereafter.*

**Family Providers:** All program staff and volunteers in emergency housing programs serving children must obtain Level 2 criminal record checks *prior to hire and at five (5) year intervals thereafter.*

## **FACILITY**

1. The shelter shall comply with applicable local fire, environmental, health, and safety standards and regulations.
2. The shelter shall be clean and in good repair.
3. The shelter shall have reasonable access to transportation services.
4. The shelter will accommodate family members together without separating them
5. The shelter shall provide a bed or crib for each guest. The shelter shall make provision for clean linens for each client. There shall be procedures to provide for the sanitizing of all linens and sleeping surfaces.
6. The shelter shall provide sufficient showers/baths, wash basins and toilets which are in proper operating condition for personal hygiene. These should be adequate for the number of people served. Clean towels, soap and toilet tissue shall be available to each client.
7. The shelter shall have private space to meet with clients.
8. The shelter shall have laundry facilities available to clients or a system available for like services.
9. The shelter shall have a fire safety plan which includes at least the following:
  - a. posted evacuation plan
  - b. fire drills, conducted at least quarterly
  - c. fire detection systems which conform to local building and fire codes
  - d. adequate fire exits
  - e. adequate emergency lighting
10. The shelter shall have adequate provision of the following services:
  - a. pest control services
  - b. removal of garbage
  - c. proper ventilation and heating/cooling systems
  - d. to ensure that entrances, exits, steps and walkways are kept clear of garbage and other debris, or hazards
11. The facility is in compliance with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is a written plan for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities.
12. The shelter shall make every effort to accommodate clients based on the gender in which they identify as it relates to accessing the bathing, toileting and dressing.
13. The shelter shall take into account, client's safety when placing and assigning them to a bed or a room.

## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

1. There shall be an accounting system which is maintained in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

2. The shelter shall have a record of accountability for client's funds or valuables the shelter is holding.
3. The shelter shall receive an annual independent audit or audit review.
4. The shelter shall have internal fiscal control procedures which are reviewed and approved by the Operating Agency Board of Directors.
5. The Operating Agency has the following insurance provisions, notices and certificates and upon request shall furnish certificates evidencing the existence of the following:
  - Worker's Compensation Certificate
  - Wage and Hour Notice
  - Unemployment Liability (if applicable)
  - Professional Liability
  - Director and Officers Liability is encouraged. Board members are informed of liability.
  - Property/Casualty for agency-owned property

### **FOOD SERVICE**

1. Shelters providing food service shall make adequate provisions for the sanitary storage and preparation of foods.
2. Shelters providing food for infants, young children and pregnant mothers shall make provisions to meet their nutritional needs.
3. Shelters shall provide, or arrange food services to clients or make known the available services nearby.
4. Shelters preparing food and serving food shall have staff complete Food Handling Certification

### **HEALTH**

1. The shelter shall have available at all times first aid equipment and supplies in case of a medical emergency.
2. All staff on duty shall have access to a telephone. Emergency telephone numbers shall be posted conspicuously near the telephone.
3. The shelter shall assure that at least one staff person on duty is trained in emergency first aid procedures.
4. The shelter shall have a procedure for making referrals to appropriate medical providers.
5. The shelter shall have a written policy regarding the possession and use of controlled substances as well as prescription and over the counter medication.
6. The shelter shall have a written policy regarding the control of infectious diseases, such as HIV, tuberculosis, etc.
7. The shelter shall provide a locked place for the storage of medications.

### **OPERATIONS**

1. In addition to sleeping arrangements and food, the shelter shall provide the following basic needs:
  - a. humane care which preserves the individual dignity
  - b. a clean environment
  - c. reasonable security
  - d. referrals to other agencies

2. The shelter shall have written policies for intake of clients and criteria for admitting people to the shelter.
3. The shelter shall maintain an attendance list which includes, at least, the name and sex of each person residing in the shelter.
4. The shelter shall post and read, or otherwise make known, the rules, regulations and procedures of the shelter.
5. The shelter shall post and read, or otherwise make known, the rights and responsibilities of shelter clients that shall include a grievance procedure for addressing potential violations of their rights.
6. The shelter shall report elder, disabled adult and child abuse and endangerment as required by law.
7. The shelter may only require clients to perform duties directly related to daily scheduled chores within the shelter and not require participation in activities that would benefit the organization.
8. The shelter shall provide access to a public or private telephone for use by shelter clients to make and receive calls.
9. The shelter shall maintain records to document services provided to each client.
10. The shelter shall provide accommodations for shelter clients to store personal belongings.
11. The shelter shall provide a safe, secure environment and have policies to regulate access.
12. The shelter shall have an approved policy for storing client medications that outlines safeguarding medications. A labeled refrigerator must be available for medications requiring refrigeration.
13. The shelter shall encourage the involvement of clients in the decision making processes of the shelter. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including having resident advisory councils to give input into the operations of the shelter, or having homeless or formerly homeless people on the board, or having homeless or formerly homeless people trained and hired as staff, or input from clients through suggestion boxes or exit surveys, etc.
14. The shelter shall allow current clients to use the shelter as a legal residence for the purpose of voter registration and the receipt of public benefits.
15. The shelter shall maintain a daily log to record at a minimum all unusual or significant incidents.
16. The shelter shall have written policies for consensual and nonconsensual searches.
17. The shelter has a policy, as well as a procedure, which addresses ADA compliance. The shelter can describe plan for accommodating persons with disabilities.
18. The shelter has a written policy regarding client possession of weapons that ensures the safety of clients, staff and volunteers. The policy should address the concealed carry law. Clients are informed of the policy.
19. The Shelter has written rules regarding leaving and returning to shelter.
20. The shelter can demonstrate that clients are given the opportunity to appeal discharge decisions. This can be information that is included on appeal forms or information that is provided as part of the intake packet to clients.
21. The shelter shall identify actions that could result in immediate discharge such as a client posing a danger to self, other residents, staff and volunteers and/or shelter property. Clients are informed of the policy.

22. Shelter staff maintains up-to-date case notes to record client or service provider contacts and client progress. Case notes are concise, factual, relevant and legible. Case notes must be recorded and placed into clients files. Case notes document at least weekly face to face contacts.

23. The shelter maintains a current case record for each client household. Clients receiving individualized assistance have case records that, in addition to basic case record documentation, include the following:

- Client assessment - SPDAT completed upon entry and exit
- Housing plan - that focuses on resolving the barriers most likely to prevent the client from successfully exiting the shelter.
- Signed consent forms for the release and exchange of information with service/housing providers identified in the case plan
- Routine case notes and documentation of ongoing services
- Documentation of routine supervisory review
- Final disposition or summary

24. The shelter collects and enters data into CMIS that is relevant to the delivery of homeless services.

25. The shelter Staff inform clients of the purpose for data collection and explain client rights concerning the collection and use of their private information.

### **HOTEL/MOTEL/OTHER BEDS FOR SHELTER PURPOSES**

**Note : These beds are not part of a supervised facility so above staffing requirements do not apply.**

Hotel/motel/Other Shelter is meant to be for a short period of time. The guiding principle of emergency shelter services is to secure a safe alternative placement, as rapidly as possible, and necessary supports for all clients to achieve stable, permanent housing. A “progressive engagement” strategy that starts with a small amount of assistance to help resolve homelessness and then adds more assistance, when necessary, if the less intensive intervention is unsuccessful. Clients are informed of the standards noted below that apply to hotel/motel/other shelter beds:

- a. Staff will do their best to accommodate their interim housing needs.
- b. Agency will ensure there shall be sufficient beds so opposite sex children are not sharing beds.
- c. Agency shall ensure the hotel/motel/shelter bed has clean sheets, adequate clean blankets, clean pillows and pillowcases, clean towels, soap and toilet paper.
- d. Client must agree to be placed in one of the hotels that accept the Agency's commitment for payment.
- e. Client must agree that only the individual/family members on your initial application will be allowed to stay in the shelter bed.
- f. Client is responsible for any damage or loss of hotel/motel/other shelter property.
- g. Client understands that incidences of domestic violence will result in termination from hotel/motel/other shelter services.
- h. Client agrees to meet at least weekly with their Case Manager as well as maintain phone contact as client progresses towards obtaining permanent housing.



- i. Client agrees to develop a Housing Plan that outlines goals and action steps that support obtaining affordable housing which can be sustained.
- j. Client agrees to supervise children 24/ 7 to ensure their safety.
- k. Client agrees to check out in time or be responsible for payment for the last day of hotel/motel/other shelter stay.
- l. Client agrees no guests are allowed.
- m. Clients placed in Hotel/ Motel/Other Shelter beds will be immediately terminated for any unlawful activity or intentional destruction of property.

### **TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

Transitional Housing means “a program that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months.”

Transitional Housing Standards are the same as well as the following:

1. TH Program shall define a maximum client stay.
2. TH Program shall define a rent structure with no more than 30% of adjusted gross income.
3. TH Program signs occupancy agreements or subleases with all clients residing in housing.
4. TH Program Participants must meet the HUD definition of homelessness.
5. TH program must assist clients in transitioning to permanent housing.
6. TH program must provide support services throughout the duration of stay.
7. TH program will document at least weekly face to face contacts for the first four to six weeks followed by contacts at a minimum of every other week based on client needs.
8. TH program will complete the SPDAT at move in and then 30 days, 90 days, 180 days, 270 days and 365 days.

**Revisions adopted by Homeless & Housing Alliance Membership - September 24, 2015**  
**Ratified by Homeless & Housing Alliance Executive Committee -April 20, 2015**  
**Adopted by Homeless & Housing Alliance Membership - April 23, 2015**

## APPENDIX

### 24 CFR 576.403 - Shelter and housing standards.

(a)*Lead-based paint remediation and disclosure.* The Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4821-4846), the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 4851-4856), and implementing regulations in 24 CFR part 35, subparts A, B, H, J, K, M, and R apply to all shelters assisted under ESG program and all housing occupied by program participants.

(b)*Minimum standards for emergency shelters.* Any building for which Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds are used for conversion, major rehabilitation, or other renovation, must meet state or local government safety and sanitation standards, as applicable, and the following minimum safety, sanitation, and privacy standards. Any emergency shelter that receives assistance for shelter operations must also meet the following minimum safety, sanitation, and privacy standards. The recipient may also establish standards that exceed or add to these minimum standards.

(1)*Structure and materials.* The shelter building must be structurally sound to protect residents from the elements and not pose any threat to health and safety of the residents. Any renovation (including major rehabilitation and conversion) carried out with ESG assistance must use Energy Star and WaterSense products and appliances.

(2)*Access.* The shelter must be accessible in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8; the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 *et seq.*) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 100; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12131 *et seq.*) and 28 CFR part 35; where applicable.

(3)*Space and security.* Except where the shelter is intended for day use only, the shelter must provide each program participant in the shelter with an acceptable place to sleep and adequate space and security for themselves and their belongings.

(4)*Interior air quality.* Each room or space within the shelter must have a natural or mechanical means of ventilation. The interior air must be free of pollutants at a level that might threaten or harm the health of residents.

(5)*Water supply.* The shelter's water supply must be free of contamination.

(6)*Sanitary facilities.* Each program participant in the shelter must have access to sanitary facilities that are in proper operating condition, are private, and are adequate for personal cleanliness and the disposal of human waste.

(7)*Thermal environment.* The shelter must have any necessary heating/cooling facilities in proper operating condition.

(8)*Illumination and electricity.* The shelter must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and support health and safety. There must be sufficient electrical sources to permit the safe use of electrical appliances in the shelter.

**(9) Food preparation.** Food preparation areas, if any, must contain suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a safe and sanitary manner.

**(10) Sanitary conditions.** The shelter must be maintained in a sanitary condition.

**(11) Fire safety.** There must be at least one working smoke detector in each occupied unit of the shelter. Where possible, smoke detectors must be located near sleeping areas. The fire alarm system must be designed for hearing-impaired residents. All public areas of the shelter must have at least one working smoke detector. There must also be a second means of exiting the building in the event of fire or other emergency.

**(c) Minimum standards for permanent housing.** The recipient or subrecipient cannot use ESG funds to help a program participant remain or move into housing that does not meet the minimum habitability standards provided in this paragraph (c). The recipient may also establish standards that exceed or add to these minimum standards.

**(1) Structure and materials.** The structures must be structurally sound to protect residents from the elements and not pose any threat to the health and safety of the residents.

**(2) Space and security.** Each resident must be provided adequate space and security for themselves and their belongings. Each resident must be provided an acceptable place to sleep.

**(3) Interior air quality.** Each room or space must have a natural or mechanical means of ventilation. The interior air must be free of pollutants at a level that might threaten or harm the health of residents.

**(4) Water supply.** The water supply must be free from contamination.

**(5) Sanitary facilities.** Residents must have access to sufficient sanitary facilities that are in proper operating condition, are private, and are adequate for personal cleanliness and the disposal of human waste.

**(6) Thermal environment.** The housing must have any necessary heating/cooling facilities in proper operating condition.

**(7) Illumination and electricity.** The structure must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and support health and safety. There must be sufficient electrical sources to permit the safe use of electrical appliances in the structure.

**(8) Food preparation.** All food preparation areas must contain suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a safe and sanitary manner.

**(9) Sanitary conditions.** The housing must be maintained in a sanitary condition.

**(10) Fire safety.**

**(i)** There must be a second means of exiting the building in the event of fire or other emergency.

**(ii)** Each unit must include at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, on each occupied level of the unit. Smoke detectors must be located, to the extent practicable, in a hallway adjacent to a bedroom. If the unit is occupied by hearing impaired persons, smoke detectors must have an alarm system designed for hearing-impaired persons in each bedroom occupied by a hearing-impaired person.

**(iii)** The public areas of all housing must be equipped with a sufficient number, but not less than one for each area, of battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detectors. Public areas include, but are not limited to, laundry rooms, community rooms, day care centers, hallways, stairwells, and other common areas.