

# OHIO BASIC STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTERS

## ADMINISTRATION

1. The shelter shall be operated by a non-profit organization, 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 shelter shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, or national origin. Shelters serving families with children shall also not discriminate on the basis of the sex or age of the children or the size of the family, except where limited by the facility.
4. The shelter's Board of Directors shall consist of voluntary (unpaid) members, with the possible exception of the agency's CEO or Director.
5. The shelter's Board of Directors shall meet at least on a quarterly basis and set overall policy for the shelter.
6. The shelter shall have a secure storage space for confidential documents relating to clients and personnel.
7. The shelter shall develop -and implement procedures to ensure the confidentiality of records pertaining to any individuals provided family violence prevention or treatment services.
8. The shelter shall have a policy manual which includes the shelter's purpose, population served, program description, non-discrimination policy and confidentiality statement.
9. The shelter shall provide for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the services offered, at least annually.

## PERSONNEL

1. The shelter shall have a table of organization 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 written policies for the selection of all paid personnel in conformance with the EEO guidelines.
3. The shelter shall have adequate, trained, on-site staff coverage during all hours the shelter is open to residents, unless individual secured units are provided.
4. All shelter staff shall receive training in at least the following:
  - a. emergency evacuation procedures;
  - b. agency operating procedures.

5. All relevant direct service staff shall receive additional training in at least the following:
  - a. non-violent crisis intervention techniques;
  - b. referral procedures to relevant community resources;
  - c. first aid procedures.

## **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 shall provide a bed or crib for each guest except in extenuating "overflow" conditions or unless the shelter has
  - a. Department of Development exemption based on size and/or type of shelter.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.
5. 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.
6. The shelter shall have private space to meet with clients.
7. The shelter shall have laundry facilities available to clients or a system available for like services.
8. 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.
9. 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, ice and snow and other hazards.
10. The shelter shall provide adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and to support the health and safety of occupants. Sufficient electrical sources shall be provided to permit the use of essential electrical appliances while assuring safety from fire.

## **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 Board of Trustees.

## **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.

## **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 child abuse and endangerment as required by law.
  7. The shelter shall only require clients to perform duties directly related to daily living activities within the shelter.
  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 a policy regarding the control of weapons.
  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, 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.

Excerpted from *Shelter Standards Clarification Manual* [www.cohhio.org/resources/shelterstandards.pdf](http://www.cohhio.org/resources/shelterstandards.pdf)