



BERGEN COUNTY HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES CENTER

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Policies and Procedures for Shelter Admission and Discharge

Admission mandate: Individuals who are seeking shelter must be currently homeless and have lived in Bergen County prior to this episode of homelessness. Priorities are given to individuals who meet the HUD definition for chronic homelessness and those individuals seeking re-entry from the Bergen County Jail.

Exclusionary Criteria Include:

1. Individuals who require services for mental health that are beyond those available at the Center and that render the individual unable to remain safely and comfortably in this environment.
2. Causes danger to himself or others or interferes with the care and comfort of other guests;
3. The individual is in need of a level of medical or nursing care that cannot be rendered safely and effectively at the facility which include but are not limited to;
 - a. Are incontinent of urine or stools
 - b. Are required to use oxygen on-site
 - c. The individual is incapable of ambulation on stairs without personal assistance unless such a person can be assigned with ground level egress;
4. The individual is under 18 years of age
5. The individual is known to be involved in gang related activities
6. The individual has had a drug distribution charge within 6 months of admission
7. The individual has demonstrated problem behavior in the Center prior to applying for shelter

Individuals who meet the exclusionary criteria may be granted very short emergency status for the following reasons:

1. Have identified housing placement but require an brief interim stay
2. Extreme weather conditions exist
3. Have arrived at night or in a condition that they cannot safely leave

Shelter staff will assist in so far as possible persons who are accepted on an emergency basis, and who are not appropriately placed, to relocate within 72 hours of the admission.

The Center does not deny admission to a person, nor remove a resident, based upon race, religion or national origin.

Discharge Criteria:

1. Upon obtaining housing or a housing voucher (TBRA, TRA, Section 8, S+Care, HUD-VASH, Supportive Housing Placement) the guest will be given 30 days to exit the shelter.
2. Destruction of property.
3. Behavior that causes danger/disturbance to Center staff and/or guests.
4. Selling or sharing of drugs with others and/or using of illegal drugs on the premises.
5. Stealing
6. Fighting
7. Tampering with smoke detectors, building systems, security cameras and/or carbon monoxide detectors
8. Smoking in the facility
9. Fraternizing with anyone employed or volunteering at the Center
10. Possession of a weapon
11. Verbal/physical abuse
12. Extreme disrespect of either staff/security or other guests
13. Use of alcohol, drugs or unauthorized medications in the Center
14. Driving under the influence of drugs/alcohol on the property

Procedure:

Any verbal or physical abuse between guests or from guest to staff member will be reason for a guests to be escorted by police from the building. A guest may not return until they meet with the Director. These actions may result in the discharge of the guests involved. Guests are given written infractions for failure to abide by the house rules in their room.

Guests are given citations by security for more serious offenses which include intoxication and the attempt to bring alcohol/drugs onto the premises. Any physical and/or verbal occurrence will be included in an incident report. Copies of all these reports are kept in the guest file and will be reviewed at any time. Guests who are involved in 3 incidents may be asked to leave the Center. Guests who consistently receive citations and break rules will be given warnings which may lead up to their losing their shelter bed.

Admission process:

Individuals may apply for shelter in person during Next Step Hours. An intake will be completed and shelter application taken. During this time an assessment is made to determine the immediate needs of the resident and whether or not the facility can meet or continue to meet those needs.

If the individual meets the criteria they will be either sheltered immediately or placed on the waiting list. Individuals should check the status of their waitlist daily. If the individual cannot be accepted immediately they are given resource materials for other local shelters.

Referrals are also accepted from partner agencies and other institutions (jails, hospitals, probation and parole, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, DYFS, social services and housing providers, houses of worship and families). In this case a referral form must be completed and additional information provided as needed. If the individual meets the criteria they will be either sheltered immediately or placed on the waiting list.

Within 24 hours staff will inform the resident of the conditions and rules governing shelter stay and discharge and of the services to be provided.

Appeal Process: If an individual is not accepted for shelter or has been negatively discharged, they may appeal this decision as follows:

- For individuals denied shelter admission or discharged from the shelter on a clinical basis they should contact the Center Director and if the issue is not resolved they should contact the Housing Authority of Bergen County.
- For individuals who are denied shelter admission or discharged from the shelter for all other reasons should contact the Shelter Manager and if the issue is not resolved they should contact the Center Director and finally the Housing Authority of Bergen County.