

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



OFFICE OF HOMELESS SERVICES



Criteria for Transitional Housing Placement- Drug and Alcohol Policy

The Office of Homeless Services (OHS) provides comprehensive case management, supportive services, and referrals to housing and emergency assistance to persons in need of assistance to maintain or regain housing. The overall goal is to assist individuals and families to move toward independent living and self-sufficiency.

This Drug and Alcohol Policy will ensure that providers demonstrate consideration of all referrals with the understanding that referrals made to transitional housing will be consistent with rules and regulations, which include no drug/alcohol abuse. Consumers that are suspected of drug or alcohol abuse are routinely screened while residing in OHS emergency housing and will only be referred to transitional housing if drug/alcohol abuse is not active. Consumers are under the same requirements in transitional housing as they are at OHS emergency housing.

Transitional housing providers will process referrals from OHS as follows:

- 1) Documented and/or verifiable clean time is ***not*** a requisite to initiating the transitional housing application process. The transitional housing provider will accept all referrals for review.
- 2) **If there is probable cause to believe** that a consumer is actively abusing drugs and/or alcohol during the assessment process, consumers will be tested for drugs and/or alcohol abuse through DBH Connected services that can include FASST or Connections or other appropriate resource.
- 3) If the consumer tests negative, the housing process will begin.
- 4) Consumers, still in OHS emergency housing, testing positive for Drug and/or Alcohol use will be connected immediately by DBH or other appropriate resource for further testing (**if necessary as verified by demonstrated pattern of abuse**), **assessment and referral to the appropriate level of care (such as detox, inpatient, or outpatient treatment)**.
- 5) Consumers who test positive will remain eligible for transitional housing but will not be considered for movement into transitional housing until they have completed treatment or a prescribed length of clean time. **Clients with one positive screen for alcohol may not be excluded from this process unless they exhibit one or more of the behaviors described in the Clinical Definition of Substance Abuse as per the *Capitalized Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* from the American Psychiatric Association (see page 3). The following process will be used to make this determination: The *DSS Integrated Case Coordination model (case conference)* will be utilized to discuss next steps for consumers that will require the participation of the appropriate staff supporting the individual or family this would include, the housing provider, case-manager, OHS or DBH staff and whoever else is deemed appropriate to attend, in which the length of clean time will be determined but cannot exceed three months.**

** DBH testing will be available for Transitional Housing Providers during the assessment and pre-housing period for those families within the OHS emergency housing system that are being targeted for Transitional Housing .*

The following process will be followed for consumers who relapse after being housed in transitional units:

- 1) When a consumer tests positive for drugs or admits relapsing to their transitional housing case manager, the consumer is put on a 30-day written contract. One of the requirements of the contract is that the consumer enrolls in outpatient treatment and/or 12-step groups, including getting a home group and a sponsor.
 - a. If the consumer has an open case with DHS, the DHS case manager and SCOH worker will be notified.
 - b. If the consumer is already enrolled in outpatient treatment, the transitional housing case manager will contact the outpatient therapist. If the consumer continues to use while in outpatient treatment, the transitional housing case manager will work with the therapist to try to get the consumer into inpatient treatment (either short-term hospital based or long-term residential treatment).
 - i. If the consumer enters an inpatient program for up to 30 days, transitional housing will continue to work with the consumer and will assist to place the children with other caregivers (usually family members) during this period. The consumer will return to his/her unit upon completion of the treatment.
- 2) At the first confirmed incidence of non-compliance with the 30-day contract as evidenced by the transitional housing or treatment provider, the consumer will receive a letter of non-compliance from the transitional housing provider and a 30-day notice of lease termination from the housing provider.
 - a. The consumer has the right to appeal this decision with the transitional housing provider in accordance with agency policies and procedures (**see revised Program Termination Policy listed below**). This appeal may result in:
 - Appeal being upheld by the transitional housing provider and the consumer receiving another 30-day written contract. (This has only happened when program policies have not been followed or documentation is not sufficient to verify non-compliance.)
 1. At the first instance of non-compliance during the 30-day period, the consumer will receive another letter of non-compliance and 30-day notice of lease termination. There will be no more opportunities to appeal within the transitional housing provider organization. The consumer may now appeal with OESS as described in 2) a.ii.1.
 - ii. Appeal being denied by the transitional housing provider.
 1. The consumer may now appeal the termination decision to OHS. This appeal may result in:
 - a. The appeal being upheld by OHS and the consumer receiving another 30-day written contract. *However, the appeal may not be upheld by OHS for consumers who have more than 2 relapses **and** fail to engage in treatment.*
 - b. The appeal being denied by OHS. The transitional housing provider will proceed with the eviction.
 - b. The transitional housing provider is to contact DHS and OHS before all of the family's appeals have been exhausted and notify them that the family may be in danger of becoming homeless if the family has indicated that they may not be able to make their own arrangements.

The goal of the OHS and transitional housing is to serve the comprehensive and complex needs of all of the consumers. Adapting our programs to meet consumer needs is a collaborative effort that will enable our consumers to enhance their lives and achieve self-sufficiency.

Definitions:

Substance abuse: Per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders from the American Psychiatric Association. (Criteria apply to drug or alcohol abuse)

- A. A maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by one or more of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:
 - 1. Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home (e.g., repeated absences or poor work performance related to substance use; substance-related absences, suspensions, or expulsions from school; neglect of children in household)
 - 2. Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous (e.g., driving an automobile or operating a machine when impaired by substance use)
 - 3. Recurrent substance-related legal problems (e.g., arrests for substance-related disorderly conduct)
 - 4. Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance (e.g., arguments with spouse about consequences of intoxication, physical fights)

 - B. The symptoms have never met the criteria for Substance Dependence (this is a more severe diagnosis indicating that the person has symptoms that may include tolerance, withdrawal, unintentional over consumption, desire to cut down on substance without success, client spends most of his or her time obtaining substance, etc...)
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