

TENNESSEE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING GUIDELINES

I. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The purpose of the Tennessee Transitional Housing Program is to provide holistic, trauma informed transitional housing services that assist victims of domestic violence, family violence, dating violence, sexual assault and/or victims of human trafficking with obtaining permanent housing. The TN Transitional Housing Program provides assistance to victims who are in need of transitional housing, short-term housing assistance, and related supportive services. Successful transitional housing programs provide a wide range of flexible services that reflect the differences and individual needs of victims and allow victims to choose the course of action that is best for them. Transitional housing programs offer individualized services such as counseling or therapy, support groups, safety planning, and advocacy services as well as practical services such as licensed child care, employment services, transportation vouchers, specific assistance and referrals to other agencies. Trained staff and case managers work with victims to help them determine and reach their goal of permanent housing.

II. TENNESSEE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

A. Creating innovative partnerships that improve the overall value and effectiveness of transitional housing by bringing together victim service providers, housing and homelessness organizations, and culturally specific organizations to provide a broad spectrum of support services that promote self-sufficiency.

B. Integrating a Trauma Informed Care approach in the service delivery of all aspects of the Transitional Housing Program.

C. Designing projects that promote economic independence and financial empowerment strategies for victims.

D. Developing partnerships that assist victims in obtaining employment that will enable them to afford basic expenses and remain economically independent including non- traditional employment opportunities.

E. Developing innovative programs to reach those clients who are underserved, unserved or inadequately served, such as the elderly, disabled, immigrants, LGBTQ community, those with limited English proficiency, and those who live in isolated impoverished rural areas.

III. **BASIC COMPONENTS OF TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS**

A. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs offer housing services and supportive services for an anticipated minimum length of stay of six months and a maximum length of stay of 24 months.

B. All support services (e.g., budgeting, counseling, substance abuse treatment) made available to and/or offered to participants of the program must be trauma informed.

C. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs make appropriate linkage and access to community resources to meet the needs of victims, children or dependents. These linkages may include community services such as medical, legal, judicial, mental health, educational, housing, employment and in-kind assistance.

D. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs include a plan to provide follow-up support services for a minimum of three months after a victim has secured permanent housing. Follow-up services include: advocacy, groups, case management, minimal financial assistance (e.g., security deposit, first month's rent, or childcare) when a survivor is establishing permanent housing.

IV. COMPLIANCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

A. The program administration of Transitional Housing Programs are not-for-profit corporations, and are tax exempt under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code; they are faith based organizations; or are state or local governmental entities.

B. Transitional Housing Programs have a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, human trafficking, and stalking. These Programs have successfully worked in the context of collaborative community partnerships and may be culturally specific organizations.

C. All Transitional Housing Programs operating under a not for profit organization have a governing board which meets regularly and adheres to the Tennessee Secretary of State's Guidebook for Nonprofits.

D. Transitional Housing Facilities are located in reasonably safe neighborhoods and provide a comfortable environment in which to reside, including: heat, ventilation, and cleanliness. There is no lead paint or peeling paint in the units/facility or on the interior walls, furniture, cabinets, doors, windows, stairs, or porches.

E. Transitional Housing locations will not be made public, except with written authorization of the person or persons responsible for the operation of such, and the confidentiality of records pertaining to any individual provided services by any supported program will be strictly maintained.

F. The program administration will submit timely and accurate annual program reports of services funded to include output, outcome and narrative reports as mandated by the funder. No information contained in the report(s) identifies any person served or enable any person to determine the identity of such a person.

G. Transitional Housing Programs comply with Tennessee Code Annotated, Sections 37-1-403 and 37-1-605 by reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the Department of Children's Services and with Tennessee Code Annotated 71-6-103 by reporting cases of adult abuse, elder/dependent adult abuse.

Transitional Housing Programs will obtain written acknowledgement that the victim has been informed of mandatory reporting laws.

H. The program administration is in compliance with the Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act.

I. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs protect the privacy of persons receiving services to ensure their safety and their families' safety. Subrecipients are prohibited from disclosing personally identifying information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through the grantee's program, to any third party or third party database without informed, written, reasonably time-limited, consent of the person, unless compelled by statutory or court mandate. Subrecipients intending to share aggregate information with other organizations must ensure that such information does not identify specific individuals.

J. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs establish and implement policies and protocols for maintaining the safety and confidentiality of persons receiving services to ensure their safety and their families' safety. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs ensure that adult residents are able to call 911 at any time needed, through the provision of cell phones or other similar means. Transitional Housing Programs adhere to fire, health and safety requirements that are in compliance with Chapter 21 of the Tennessee Life Safety Code and all other applicable health, safety codes and standards.

K. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs maintain a formal complaint or grievance procedure to ensure client concerns are heard and have an opportunity for resolution. This process enables programs to address client concerns about services provided or the conduct of Transitional Housing professionals, agency partners, and volunteers providing services to the participants. Transitional Housing Programs obtain written acknowledgement that the victim has been informed of the grievance procedure.

L. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs maintain an informed client consent policy and are in compliance with all state and federal laws protecting the privacy of the participant, including the types of information and documents that may be in a participant's (physical or electronic) file. These include, but are not limited to, medical and legal records. At no time is a victim required to sign a client consent form to share information in order to access services.

M. A victim's consent to share information pursuant to the client consent policy is not to be construed as a waiver of confidentiality or any privilege held by the victim or the Tennessee Transitional Housing Program's professionals.

N. Tennessee Transitional Housing Programs maintain a formal mandatory training program for all staff and volunteers of not less than eight (8) hours per year specifically addressing the victim type being served by the program, i.e. appropriate training related to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or human trafficking.

V. BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLKIT GUIDES

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) offers a comprehensive and recommended Toolkit with relevant forms and model policies for Transitional Housing. This toolkit is meant to provide transitional housing providers with easy access to information and resources to enhance services to survivors. The information provided includes frequently asked question, common challenges, best practices, templates for adaption, and resources for additional information and assistance.