

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF BROOME COUNTY
Teen Transitional Living Program
Resident Handbook

PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of TTLP is to provide a safe, stable and supportive living environment for up to 18 months, to 16-21 year old runaway and homeless youth, males/females, including those who are pregnant and/or parenting and LGBTQ. TTLP provides intensive services that promote positive youth development. TTLP assists residents in attaining goals they have set for themselves by providing an array of services and programming to empower youth and teach skills they will need as they move from crisis to transitional to independent living and self-sufficiency.

INTRODUCTION

The Teen Transitional Living Program (TTLP) was established to provide you with the help needed to successfully live on your own. Individuals accepted into the program may stay and participate for up to eighteen months. During that time, you will talk with staff about what you feel are the most important issues to address and the goals you would like to work on. Staff partner with you to create a service plan that provides a structure in which you can explore and achieve your hopes and dreams, and identifies the skills you will need to develop to attain your goals. Staff will provide assistance for achieving goals by teaching skills, orienting you to community resources and creating links to services as necessary. While in the program, there are rules and guidelines that you are asked to follow to ensure that each individual person and their rights are respected and supported. This handbook has been put together as your guide to the policies and procedures for the program. If at any time you have questions or are uncertain about anything regarding the program, please contact the TTLP Program Manager or Supervisor.

RESIDENT RIGHTS

While you are a resident of the TTLP, you may expect to be treated in a respectful manner. The following are rights that have been established.

1. The right to live in a safe, clean and healthy environment. This includes the right to be free of physical or sexual harassment or abuse, and neglect. This includes a right to be free of self-inflicted threats to life or safety. _____
2. The right to a balanced range of foods with proper nutritional value. _____
3. The right to proper and prompt medical and dental treatment. _____
4. The right to clean seasonally and age appropriate clothing. _____
5. The right to pursue appropriate educational and work opportunities in academic or vocational areas in relationship to your capacities and preferences. _____
6. The right to maintain one's own possessions as long as those possessions are not considered dangerous to you or others. _____
7. The right to participate in meaningful spiritual activities on a voluntary basis and the freedom to practice the religion of choice. _____
8. The right to privacy of one's person or property, including the right to confidentiality. Staff may search your apartment only when they suspect illegal or dangerous activity. _____
9. The right to have access to case records, as clinically appropriate and to determine the goals and activities that are most meaningful. _____
10. The right to communicate with significant others. This includes the right to communicate verbally and/or in writing, and to visit. _____

ON-CALL PROCEDURE

On-call is used for emergency purposes only, if you are involved in a situation that puts you or someone in your apartment in danger please call 911 before calling the TTLP Crisis Line. TTLP Crisis Line: **(607) 759-3970**

Emergencies include: necessity to go to the ER, a fire, police involvement, loss of heat, power outage, a state of emergency preventing your return to the apartment or anything that would require immediate notification of TTLP staff.

DIRECTIONS

1. Call the Crisis Line from the nearest safe location where you can receive return calls.
2. Leave a message including the following:
 - Your **NAME**
 - Your **LOCATION**
 - A **PHONE NUMBER WHERE YOU CAN RECEIVE RETURN CALLS**
 - A brief **SUMMARY OF THE EMERGENCY**, including whether you can safely stay at your current location to receive a return phone call.
3. Wait at least 15 minutes for on call staff to call you back. Do not make other phone calls or leave the area where you can receive calls until you hear back from the staff, unless you are at risk of immediate physical danger. **You are responsible for being available for return calls when you call the TTLP Crisis Line.**
4. If you can not safely remain at the location or be reached by the phone number you have provided on the message, you are responsible for calling the Crisis Line back as soon as you are able to reach a safe location with a phone.

***Note: For all NON-EMERGENCY calls, please call the TTLP staff who is on shift. If no staff is working you can leave a message for TTLP staff at 584-7810 ext. 430. Voicemail for TTLP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If at any time you feel that your rights and/or concerns are not being addressed, you have the right to process a grievance through the following procedure:

1. It is expected that every effort will be made with the person of conflict to informally address complaints on an ongoing basis within the program with Staff and the Program Manager. To do this, set up a meeting with the TTLP staff and the Program Manager to explain in detail your complaint and the desired outcome.

TTLP Office: 584-7800 ext. 430

Program Manager, Carole Wesko at 584-7800, x 403.

2. If a complaint or dispute cannot be resolved at that level, forward the complaint, **in writing**, to the Division Director of the Catholic Charities Children and Youth Division, who will review and respond within five working days.

Tonya Brown, Deputy Director
Catholic Charities Of Broome County
86-88 Walnut Street
Binghamton, New York 13905
(607) 584-7800

3. If a resolution cannot be reached, the complaint will be forwarded to the Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Broome County, Lori Accardi.

If a resolution still cannot be reached, the complaint will be forwarded to the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities for review and decision. Action will be taken within ten working days from the time the complaint is forwarded.

If the complaint cannot be resolved within Catholic Charities, the complaint will be forwarded to the Broome County Youth Bureau.

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Service Planning

Each person in the program will work with a Case Manager to set and obtain goals. Within the first 30 days of acceptance into the program a service plan will be developed by you with assistance from your Case Manager. Every 60 days following, you will meet with your Case manager to review progress towards your goals and update your service plan.

2. Communication with Staff

a. Contact

Residents must have daily contact with TTLP staff. In addition residents must have weekly contact with their Case manager. If you cannot make the scheduled appointment for any reason, notify your Case Manager as soon as possible and make arrangements for a new appointment. If your Case Manager is not available, leave a message.

b. Schedule Planning

Residents are responsible for planning the use of their time. If you need help making a schedule, please request staff assistance. The schedule should include times for: laundry, grocery shopping, house cleaning, school/study time, work, counseling appointments, medical appointments, community service, recreation, ILS classes and other appointments.

c. Menu Planning

Residents are responsible for planning for their own dietary needs. You will be given a weekly food allowance and asked to plan a seven-day menu that includes three well-balanced meals. From your menu, you should create a shopping list to assist in your purchase of groceries. When you come into the program staff will assist you with menu planning, nutrition and shopping on a budget. Once you have demonstrated that you are prepared to shop independently a food cards will be issued to weekly you will be required to get your self to the grocery store. You will receive your food card each week as long as long as you hand in your receipts from the previous week. You also need to hand in your menu and schedule to your Case Manager for that week. If you are not following through with responsibilities, TTLP staff will resume taking you shopping.

d. Budgeting

Residents are responsible for developing a monthly budget based on their resources. Your Case manager will be available to assist you with this.

3. Program Participation

a. Independent Living Skills classes

Residents must attend the Independent Living Skills Class. Classes meet for approximately one hour weekly. Please be on time for these classes. Many of our group facilitators are our Community partners who volunteer their time to support you. Report any scheduling

conflicts to your Case Manager. You will also be required to attend individual meetings with staff to work on relevant Independent Skills.

b. Counseling services

Residents are able to participate in Gateway Counseling if they are interested and do not have a current therapist. Residents are able to meet with our Division Clinical Specialist for alternatives to counseling.

c. Pregnancy and/or Parenting

Parenting individuals are expected to work with a parent educator. These programs help to provide you with information about the stages of child development and to assist you in developing parenting skills necessary for the success of your child.

d. Education, Employment and career planning

Residents are required to attend an educational program or be employed full-time or seek employment during your stay with TTLP. TTLP staff can provide you with assistance building interviewing skills, writing resumes and obtaining employment or you may be referred to an employment specialist if you qualify.

e. Community Service

Residents are expected to attend scheduled community service projects and are encouraged to participate in additional projects as often as possible. Participating in volunteering in the community is a way to “give back” for their support. This also provides an opportunity to explore businesses and organizations, meet community providers and build skills and identify completed tasks to put on your resume.

f. Physical and Dental Examination

Within the first 30 days of admission, you must have a physical exam. Once you obtain insurance coverage a dental exam will be scheduled. If you do not have your own doctor or dentist, your Case Manager will assist you in obtaining one. If you had a physical or dental exam within the past month, you can ask your doctor or dentist to use that exam for our form.

4. Apartment Related Responsibilities

a. Housekeeping

Residents are responsible for keeping their apartment neat and orderly on a daily basis. You are to share the responsibility for common areas with your roommates and to keep your bedroom clean and neat on your own. Each apartment will create chore schedule to assure that each roommate is contributing to the cleanliness of the apartment. Your Case Manager is available to assist you in learning any necessary skills to complete these chores successfully. Every three months, you are asked to deep clean the apartment. There is a checklist to assist you with this process.

b. Garbage Disposal

Garbage disposal is your responsibility. You should take the garbage out to the appropriate cans/dumpster as needed. When garbage is full, you should take it directly to the appropriate can or dumpster. **Garbage should never be stored on your porch, hallway, or front steps.** Residents are responsible for recycling appropriate containers and bringing the empty recycling bin back to the apartment the day of garbage pickup. Residents are responsible for bringing the cans to the curb and returning them to the house.

c. Laundry

Residents are responsible for doing their own laundry, including bed linens and towels weekly. Residents will use the public laundry mat. A weekly laundry allowance will be provided to you, if you are employed you may be asked to contribute some of your pay. TTLP staff will transport and assist you in learning the skills necessary to do this task independently. Once you have demonstrated that you are prepared to complete your laundry independently you will be required to get yourself to and from the laundry mat.

d. Phone Calls

No long distance calls are to be made from the apartment phones. **Any additional charges accrued by you are your responsibility and you will be expected to make payment in full.** No other phone feature is to be used by program residents including but not limited to *69 and 411-Information. A phone book has been provided in each apartment.

e. Personal Inventory

At the time of move in, a Case Manager will assist you to inventory your personal belongings. This is helpful to assess what items you may need. **This inventory, however, does not in any way hold TTLP responsible if something is lost, stolen or left behind at the time you leave the program.** TTLP staff will do whatever possible to help you recover belongings, but we will not be financially responsible for replacing any of your personal items. A locked box is provided at the time of admission for you to keep anything of value. While you are in the program it is your responsibility to keep your key and box in a safe place. Do not tell anyone where you keep your key or your locked box

5. Education

If you do not have your high school diploma or have not successfully completed your GED, you are expected to participate in an educational program that is designed to meet your needs. A Case Manager is available to assist with and attend any conferences or meetings that relate to your education. You are responsible for maintaining regular attendance to your educational program. If you are unable to attend school due to illness, you must contact your school and Case Manager first thing in the morning (before you are scheduled to be there). If no one is available, leave a message. If you are ill staff may ask you to obtain a doctor's note in order to provide you with a note that states your absence should be a legal absence. This is important, because if you are receiving illegal absences, you will receive consequences from the program. In addition, if you miss school for any reason, you are expected to stay in your apartment. This means no overnights, extended curfews, no work, etc. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

6. Employment

As financial self-sufficiency will be a major area that staff will be working with you on, you may be expected to obtain and maintain a part-time job and/or volunteer work while residing in TTLP. Establishing work experience and positive employer references is important to obtaining future employment. For those who are still in high school employment is not required and is considered a privilege. All high school students will be required to maintain passing grades in order to obtain and/or stay employed. Residents will be responsible in keeping work schedule commitments. If you are ill or must miss work for a legitimate reason, you are expected to contact the work supervisor immediately. You will also need to advise Case Manager's of missed work and an explanation. In promoting independent living skills residents are required to get themselves to and from work. If you will be relying on the public transportation system you need to plan your work schedule accordingly.

7. Sleep Over/Extended Curfew Policy

If you would like to request an overnight to someone else's home, you must fill out an Overnight Request at least 24 hours in advance. This will assist you in developing good time management skills and will also give staff the time they may need to approve it. You can request overnights as long as you are meeting all program expectations.

Extended Curfews may also be granted if all other program expectations are being met. Extended curfews must be requested by completing the form at least 24 hours in advance.

8. Smoking Policy

All TTLP apartments are **NON-SMOKING** apartments. Any cigarette smoking should be done outside the program apartment. In Binghamton, you may not smoke on Catholic Charities property, including the parking lot. **YOU are responsible for disposing the cigarette butts appropriately where they are not posing a fire hazard.** A metal can with water or sand should be used for cigarette disposal. **DO NOT DISPOSE OF YOUR CIGARETTES ON THE GROUND.** Catholic Charities wants to support you in not smoking at all. If you are interested in quitting, please let us know. There are programs that work!

9. Snow/Weather and State of Emergency Policy

If the weather conditions or other circumstances are so that a state of emergency is declared, residents are expected to remain in the apartment. Staff will make contact with all residents by phone (please have your line free) as soon as possible to assure all residents are safe and accounted for. If you are not at your apartment when a state of emergency is declared, call the Crisis Line immediately to notify staff.

10. Discharge Policy

You are responsible to remove all personal belongings at the time you leave the apartment. TTLP is not responsible for your personal belongings. If anything is left behind, staff will attempt to contact you to come and get it. Staff will hold belongings **FOR UP TO 7 DAYS ONLY**. If you do not make arrangements with staff to get your belongings, it will be donated or thrown away.

11. Additional Rules Governing Resident Conduct (Behavioral Contract)

Case Management:

- 1.) If I am under the age of 18, I understand that the TTLP program is required to notify my parent(s)/guardian of my involvement, as well as my emotional and physical state. I understand that no other information will be discussed unless I provide a release of information form. _____
- 2.) I understand that I may be asked to sign a release for my case manager to discuss services with other organizations requested by me including making a referral, setting up appointments and monitoring attendance and progress. _____
- 3.) I will report any changes in my schedule, absences from school or work to TTLP staff as soon as I am aware of them. _____
- 4.) I understand that TTLP staff has the ability to implement consequences for non-compliance with the rules. _____

Apartments:

- 1.) I will not destroy apartment property, and will not put holes in the walls by hanging decorations. I may decorate using pre approved wall hanging material. _____

- 2.) I agree to respect the privacy of my neighbors and roommate(s). I will not enter their space or use their belongings without their permission. _____
- 3.) I am responsible for my house key; I will not lend it to anyone or make copies of the key under any circumstances. _____
- 4.) I will keep my apartment neat and clean. I will comply with the cleaning duties delegated by staff members in accordance to the cleaning check list. _____
- 5.) No pets/animals are allowed in the apartments. _____

Curfew/Obligations:

- 1.) I understand that as a new resident I will be required to participate in a 30 day orientation period. During this period I understand that I will be required to remain in my apartment from 9:00 pm until 6:00 am the following day. _____
- 2.) During orientation period, I understand that there will be no extended curfews or overnight requests permitted. After orientation period I will be allowed to request extended curfew and overnights with 24 hour notice. I will submit the appropriate forms and understand that approval is dependent on my progress and staffs' discretion. _____
- 3.) Regular curfew hours after completing orientation are from 10:00pm until 6:00am the following day. I will comply with the regular curfew. _____
- 4.) I will fill out the paperwork required including weekly menus and schedules. Laundry and grocery money will be distributed upon completion. _____
- 5.) I agree to attend all scheduled appointments and program activities including the weekly Independent Living Skills Class. _____
- 6.) I will apply for Temporary Assistance through the Department of Social Services and comply with their requests and guidelines. I understand that staff will assist me in this process. _____

Visitors/Overnights:

- 1.) **No visitors are permitted in the apartments.** _____
- 2.) Any persons/strangers (i.e. maintenance, plumber, cable guy etc) are not permitted in the apartments unless a staff person is present. _____
- 3.) After orientation period, I will be able to request overnight's. This is dependent upon progress in the program and that requests must be submitted 24 hours in advance. _____
- 4.) Overnights may not be granted if there is concern with attendance and grades at school, lack of participation in programming or location of overnight is determined to be unsafe or inappropriate. _____

School/Work:

- 1.) I understand that I am required to be enrolled and maintain a full time school, GED program, job training, or job position to remain in the program. I understand that I have 30 days to enroll in any of the above listed options. _____
- 2.) I understand that if I miss a day of school or work I am required to remain in my apartment for the day and notify staff. _____
- 3.) I agree to contribute 20% of my paychecks toward my laundry & groceries (for residents working a full-time job). _____
- 4.) I agree to put some of my weekly paycheck into a bank account. If I do not have an account my case manager will help me set up an account in my name. _____

Substance Use/Aggressive behavior and Weapons:

- 1.) I understand that TTLP has a zero tolerance policy. There will be no use or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or weapons while participating in the program. _____

- 2.) I understand that there is no physically aggressive or bullying behavior allowed at TTLP. This may lead to immediate discharge from the program. _____
- 3.) I agree to submit to random drug testing at the request of staff. _____
- 4.) I understand that there is no use of tobacco products in the TTLP apartments. _____
- 5.) Possessions or clothing displaying the promotion of drugs, alcohol, weapons, violence or gang involvement is not permitted. _____
- 6.) Any drugs/alcohol/weapons/destruction of property in the TTLP apartments or gang involvement may result in immediate notification of the police and possible eviction from the apartment. _____

Violation Procedure

Program rules and expectations are in place to ensure the safety of all TTLP residents. Any complaints from neighbors or landlord/lady will be investigated by staff members. Violation of rules may result in the following:

- Verbal Warning with instruction of how to alleviate the problem area.
- Written Warning with instructions of how to alleviate the problem area.
- Appearance before the TTLP screening committee to investigate appropriateness for the program.
- Eviction and discharge from the TTLP program.

The rules and guidelines of the Teen Transitional Living Program have been developed to protect your rights and to assure a safe and healthy living environment for all participants.

Resident Handbook Acknowledgement

I, _____ have reviewed the Teen Transitional Living Program Resident Handbook and I acknowledge that I understand and agree to abide by the policies, procedures and rules as stated in the Handbook. _____ (resident initials)

Behavior Contract Acknowledgement

I, _____ have read and understand the rules and guidelines of the TTLP program. I agree to comply with the rules to the best of my ability while I am in the program. _____ (resident initials)

On-Call Procedure Acknowledgement

I, _____ have reviewed the on-call procedure and understand the expectations associated with it. I agree to follow the rules outlined in the procedure and will ask staff if I have any questions or concerns regarding on-call. _____ (resident initials)

Applicant/Resident

Date

Case Manager

Date

TTLP Program Supervisor

Date