



Religious Coalition Emergency Family Shelter

Host Congregation Guide

Dear Partner in Service,

Thank you for your willingness to explore how you can assist the ministry of the Religious Coalition Emergency Family Shelter. We at the Religious Coalition sincerely express our gratitude for your help and hope that we further forge a continuing bond with your congregation through this ministry. It is our hope that together we address the large gap in services that exists in shelter for homeless families in Frederick County.

This guide is intended to explain some of the program details as well as what to expect as a host congregation. We urge your congregation leadership to thoroughly examine what will be required of your building, your parishioners and your resources to be sure this arrangement fits comfortably into your building and your schedule. We urge open communication at all times for any concerns that may arise. Please note that while the planning committee has attempted to address most all aspects of this program, the final details have not yet been permanently set and your opinions and recommendations will be taken into consideration before the final program guidelines are drafted. Your opinions are invaluable to the continued success of this program.

If interested in joining the network as a host site, start thinking about a person in your congregation that will serve as the Site Coordinator. The Coordinator will work with the Shelter Director to ensure a smooth transition throughout the sheltering process. The Site Coordinator will serve on the RCEFS Advisory Committee that, along with the Shelter Director, will be comprised of host and network congregation members.

Along with the Site Coordinator, volunteers will be essential to the varying components of the RCEFS. We ask that a host site, or network church begin recruitment for volunteers soon after they partner with the shelter. The Religious Coalition's Volunteer Coordinator will also work with your congregation to help recruit and schedule volunteers. The types of volunteers and numbers needed are explained in further detail later in this guide.

We are excited about this program and what God can do through us in serving those in need in our community. We wish to express our sincerest appreciation for your assistance in reaching what will be a large step in truly addressing an unmet need in Frederick County.

Sincerely,

Rev. Brian Scott
Executive Director
Religious Coalition for Emergency
Human Needs

Summary of the Shelter Program

Our Goal:

The RCEFS strives to ease the effects of homelessness on Frederick County families by providing a safe, compassionate environment while providing the necessary resources in hopes of their regaining self-sufficiency.

This is accomplished by:

Keeping families intact

Ensuring families are participating in case management

Using best practices and common sense to overcome obstacles to self sufficiency

Who we serve:

The Shelter Program serves families who are homeless. The definition of family can vary from household to household. To serve as many families as possible, the definition of eligible families is stated as one or two parents or guardians that have legal and physical custody of one or more minor child age 17 years or younger.

How we serve:

The RCEFS is a scattered-site shelter program comprised of local churches, all who assist with various functions of the program. A minimum of 13 churches are needed to provide actual shelter space in their buildings, while any number of churches and organizations will provide volunteers, food and other in-kind support. Ideally a church serving as a host site commits to one week per quarter in which homeless households reside in a designated space for 7 nights. Total time a resident family may stay in the program is no longer than 90 days. Residents are transported by Religious Coalition staff to and from host sites each day and during the day the residents are taken to the RCEFS Day Shelter where they are able to keep the family unit intact and to work on identified case management goals.

Screening Protocol and Resident Approval

The Religious Coalition hopes to ease any reservations a host congregation may have about serving in the shelter site network by addressing two main areas of concern. The following information addresses the procedure by which the Religious Coalition interviews and approves residents for placement, as well as how residents are referred to your building for shelter.

The safety of our resident families, volunteers and staff is foremost in importance. The Religious Coalition has a screening process designed to thoroughly examine all members of a potential resident family to ensure to our best ability that there are no harm causing factors present.

The resident guest screening process includes a(n):

- criminal background check, using a national database
- review of medical and mental health history
- child welfare check
- substance abuse history assessment
- evaluation of short term housing options

NO household member(s)* will be permitted admission if:

- there is an active arrest warrant
- there is any conviction or pending case for a violent crime
- a household member is a registered sex offender or has been convicted of a sex-related crime
- a household member has a known acute and/or communicable disease or illness
- a household member has been barred from any Religious Coalition property
- a household member is actively intoxicated

*The remaining members of the household may still be eligible for admission.

****IMPORTANT****

Criminal background checks are also conducted on ALL volunteers and staff working in any host site with RCEFS. If a staff member or volunteer already has a current STAND or similar certification, this may eliminate the need for an additional background check.

Admission Details

Screened resident families will not show up at your building unapproved or unannounced. This program is unlike the Cold Weather Shelter in that it is not a walk in program. The process by which resident families are referred to your building will be handled entirely by the Religious Coalition. There may be a possibility that through word of mouth an individual or family may show up and request admission. Per the Client Contract, residents should not divulge the current location or the identities of the other residents in the program and violation of this may result in discharge. To ensure the safety of all involved, **NO** unapproved residents can be admitted to a shelter site during that site's host week. Religious Coalition staff will be responsible for redirecting any individuals or unapproved families seeking shelter to the appropriate resources.

Eligibility:

To serve as many families as possible, the definition of eligible families is stated as one or two parents or guardians that have legal and physical custody of one or more minor child age 17 years or younger. If the applying adults do not have a child biologically in common, they must demonstrate that they have lived together prior to homelessness. The family must also be able to transition into an applicable shelter program or housing option as an intact unit.

Intake process:

Potentially eligible families will be interviewed at the Religious Coalition where the screening process will take place. Upon a successful screening and approval for shelter, a resident family will be given an admission time and location of your site. Additionally, a roster of approved resident families will be given to your Site Coordinator and will be updated as needed. A daily resident log will be provided by the shelter's case management staff that highlights and instructs about any notable changes or issues a resident family may be experiencing. Families without transportation will be shuttled by the shelter van to and from your location during admission and exit times.

Admission denial:

From the time the shelter screening takes place at the Coalition, until the admission time at your site, it may be possible that a household member becomes intoxicated. Per the Client Contract, alcohol and drug use is prohibited while residing in RCEFS. All adult residents will be breathalyzed by staff nightly. Any adult who registers a positive alcohol screen will be denied admission and likely exited from the program. Adults are also subject to an initial and random urinalysis throughout the program. Additionally, if a household member is exhibiting signs of intoxication that is not alcohol related, the Shelter Director will be contacted and that household member may be denied admission. Any admission denials or discharges for substance use or any other rule infraction will be handled exclusively by staff.

Volunteer Needs and Roles

The operation of the RCEFS is dependent on the work of volunteers. The Shelter program, in its entirety, will utilize a very large volunteer corps. For each host site, a corps of an estimated 15 volunteers will be needed. This number will reduce if volunteers choose to do multiple nights or fulfill multiple roles. If your congregation is unable to meet the needed number of volunteers, additional help will be provided from other support congregations. The following are the various volunteer positions and their general roles.

Site Coordinator (1 per site):

Your congregation will first need to designate a Site Coordinator. This person will be the main interface between the Shelter Director and your site. The coordinators duties are as follows:

- Volunteer recruitment and orientation in combination with the Religious Coalition's volunteer coordinator
- Have a comprehensive understanding of the shelter process
- Attend meetings with the Shelter Director and other Site Coordinators periodically to discuss on-going operations and any issues that may arise
- Opening and locking of host site at admission and exit times(Or designee)
- Have an awareness of any specific resident, volunteer, or building need that may arise during the host time
- Be available by phone at any time there are residents in your building
- Will review the daily resident log and update volunteers as needed
- Maintain a master list of site volunteers and be able to communicate with the group via email or phone

Evening Volunteers (2-3 per night):

Evening volunteers account for the majority of needed assistance. Their direct involvement is essentially the makeup of the Shelter program. Evening staffing is generally comprised of 1 staff member and 2-3 volunteers. Evening volunteer duties are as follows:

- Warmly engage resident families upon admission and entrance to your church
- Direct families to their sleeping areas
- Maintain the bed log of assigned sleeping areas
- May offer families fun or creative activities such as games, crafts, etc.
- Can assist children with homework or other learning opportunities
- Provide unconditional positive regard to families and serve as an outlet if a family member wishes to discuss issues they are experiencing
- Provide an evening snack if desired

Volunteer Needs and Roles (cont'd)

Overnight Volunteers: (1-2 per night, ideally 1 male & 1 female)

Overnight staffing is generally comprised of 1 staff member and 1-2 volunteers. This ensures smooth transitions from the evening to the morning. The volunteers do not need to be awake during the entire shift and volunteers are encouraged to sleep when possible. Overnight volunteer duties are as follows:

- To ensure resident families are in their appropriate sleeping areas with their family prior to lights out
- To address any issue(s) that arise overnight
- To wake up guests at appropriate wake-up times for transport to the day shelter
- To monitor and report any behavioral issues that are observed

Additional Volunteer opportunities exist beyond what is listed. A support congregation may opt to provide any various types of in-kind assistance as part of their commitment. These could be by way of food support to the Day Shelter, tutoring for school age children or adults in school, or other ideas a network congregation may have. The RCEFS is willing to consider any activity or support that is conducive to the overall well-being of its residents.

Volunteers Dos and Don'ts

We encourage all volunteers to be accessible and compassionate when working with resident families. To keep all parties safe from potential negative issues that may arise when working with resident families, we ask that all volunteers keep in mind:

- To maintain appropriate boundaries(physically, financially, emotionally) between themselves and residents at all times
-
- To show respect for residents time, property, opinions and parenting style
- That parents are responsible for their own children at all times
- To lead by example, and to model good parenting skills when working with children
- To never transport residents in their own vehicles
- To voice concern to RCEFS staff if any harm causing behavior is observed

Child Safety

No one can ignore the fact that sometimes children are abused emotionally or physically. No one ever wants this to happen to any child. The Religious Coalition encourages all host sites to use common sense and best-practice to guard against the possibility that a resident child would be abused in a site.

The following rules are not meant to suggest that children are at special risk in a host site of being abused, but rather to help protect children from abuse by deterring would-be abusers and eliminating situations in which abuse can occur. These guidelines also protect well-meaning adults from unfounded accusations.

These guidelines are to be enforced consistently for ALL staff, volunteers and residents.

- The basic rule is that no one adult will supervise or be left alone with any number of children that are not directly related to the adult on the church property.
- Parents may never leave children unattended at any host site.
- Parents must be made aware of their child's involvement in a group activity.
- If an emergency occurs, the adult will choose (if possible) someone (staff, volunteer, resident) to temporarily supervise the child until the alternate childcare provider is reached. If the adult is unable to choose, staff will supervise the child until the alternate provider is reached.
- Volunteers will not transport residents in their own vehicles. All transportation will be provided by the Religious Coalition.
- A volunteer will immediately report to staff any observed event that is witnessed that could cause harm to any resident guest or volunteer

In the event of a suspected report of abuse, the RCEFS Director will be notified immediately.

*****DRAFT*****

Daily Schedule

- 5:45am- Wake-up call
- 6:15am- Transport to the Day Shelter
- 6:30am- Breakfast
- 6:45-7a- School pick ups
- 10am-12pm- Morning case management appointments
- 12pm- Lunch
- 1pm-3pm- Afternoon Case Management Appointments
- 3pm- School Drop Offs
- 3pm-5pm- After-School Program/Homework
- 5:30 pm- Dinner
- 6:30pm- Transport to Evening Shelter/Site opens for admission
- 8pm- Admission curfew
- 10pm- Lights Out

ITEMS NEEDED

BABY:

Diapers (All Sizes)
Baby Wipes
Diaper Rash Cream

MISC:

Gifts Cards (Payless, Wal-Mart, Etc.)

DAY SHELTER:

Pots
Pans
Silverware
Dishes
Cups
Kitchen Utensils
Sponges
Window Cleaner
Bleach
Dish Soap
Mop
Mop Bucket
Laundry Detergent
Dryer Sheets
Disinfectant Wipes
Trash Cans
Non-Latex Gloves (Sm/Med/Large)
Coffee
Soup
Energy/Granola Bars

HYGIENE:

Bath Soap
Shampoo
Conditioner
Toothpaste
Combs/Brushes
Anti-Bacterial Hand Sanitizer
Feminine Hygiene Products
Shaving Cream
Razors
Deodorant

CLOTHING:

Hats, Gloves (Men/Women/Children)
T-Shirts (All Sizes, Men/Women/Children)
Underwear (All Sizes/ Men/Women/Children)
Socks (All Sizes)

*****DRAFT*****

EMERGENCY FAMILY SHELTER RULES AND REGULATIONS
CLIENT CONTRACT

1. No weapons are allowed at any Shelter site. This includes, but is not limited to: guns, knives, clubs, blackjacks, mace, etc. Weapons must be turned-in to staff and will be forwarded to the Frederick City Police Department if necessary. If staff or volunteers discover weapons it may be grounds for immediate discharge.
2. No smoking inside any Shelter site. Any smoking areas, if permitted, will be determined by the Shelter site.
3. Alcohol and controlled-dangerous substances are not allowed in any Shelter site. The use of alcohol and controlled-dangerous substances (i.e., illegal drugs) is prohibited while you are residing in the Shelter. Anyone exhibiting symptoms of active intoxication will be refused admission or asked to leave if already admitted. Any illegal substances discovered in a shelter site will be immediately reported to the Frederick Police Department. All adults in a resident family will be breathalyzed nightly, and anyone with a positive alcohol screen will be refused admission. A urinalysis is conducted prior to your admission and adult guests are subject to random urinalysis during their time in the Shelter Program.
4. Prescription drugs and medicines must be kept in a locked valuables box that will be maintained by the Shelter staff. Medications that require refrigeration will be kept in a refrigerator maintained by Shelter staff.
5. Valuables may be secured with shelter staff and you will receive a receipt for your valuables; however, neither the Shelter site nor the Religious Coalition will be responsible for any valuables or personal items that are lost or stolen.
6. Verbal and physical abuse or threats are not allowed.
7. Visitors are not allowed in the Shelter; personal messages will not be recorded; and the identity of shelter residents will not be divulged due to confidentiality and the protection of all residents. Residents are not allowed to divulge the location of the shelter to the public. Unapproved homeless families may apply for shelter at the Religious Coalition.
8. All approved residents must check in and remain in the shelter by 8pm, unless work or educational classes require you to be out later. Any exemptions to this rule must be pre-approved by Religious Coalition staff and must be in writing.
10. Wake-up is no later than 5:45a.m. at which time residents must gather their possessions and get ready to be transported to the Day Shelter. Lights out is at 10 p.m.
11. Unless you have your own vehicle, transportation to the day and evening shelter site is available. You will be provided a schedule of pick up times and locations.
12. Residents and their belongings are subject to search while residing in the Shelter Program.

13. Laundry provided **PRESUMABLY AT DAY SHELTER TBD**
14. You will be responsible for providing assistance in cleaning and maintaining the Shelter. The staff will assign you specific duties and you are expected to help whenever necessary.
15. Storage space and parking spaces are not available at the Shelter sites. Please bring a minimum of personal belongings to the Shelter and you are responsible for finding your own parking. Personal televisions, lamps, and large electrical appliances are not allowed. Staff must approve all other personal electrical appliances.
16. All matters concerning you, your family and other clients are confidential. This means that the Shelter will not give out information about you without your permission. Please do not discuss matters pertaining to other residents.
17. All residents are required to apply for all area transitional shelters and applicable housing programs. You must be willing to accept any available and appropriate transitional or permanent housing options, and failure will result in discharge from the shelter. **ADD CASE MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE**
18. Information that constitutes or threatens physical or mental harm, neglect, or abuse of oneself or another person, will be immediately reported to the proper authority. Criminal acts and violations of laws will be reported to the Frederick City Police Department.
20. Children must be supervised by their parents at all times. Family units must remain intact while residing at the shelter. Any child left unattended will immediately be reported to Child Protective Services and Frederick City Police.
21. In accordance with state law, all school-age children must immediately register and attend Frederick County Schools; failure to comply with this law may warrant discharge and other legal actions.
23. You must sign this Client Contract, which ensures you will participate in Shelter Programs and abide by Shelter Regulations. Failure to participate or follow regulations may warrant your immediate discharge from the Shelter.

Staff must approve exceptions to these rules. Infractions of the above rules may be cause for immediate discharge from the Emergency Shelter.

I, the undersigned, understand and agree to abide by the above rules:

Client

Date

Staff Member/Witness

Date

**Memorandum of Understanding on overnight Emergency Family Shelter
between The Religious Coalition and (enter church name and location here)**

Effective Date: This Memorandum of Understanding(MOU) takes effect as indicated below the signature lines of the Religious Coalition Emergency Family Shelter(RCEFS) Director and the responsible counterpart in (Name of Church). This agreement remains intact for one year from the signature date. Both parties will review this agreement prior to its end and will notify the other party of its intent to continue the MOU as is, or suggest modifications.

Termination: RCEFS or (Insert Church) may give notice to terminate this MOU by notifying the other party in writing 10 business days in advance of formal cancellation.

Purpose: To provide RCEFS resident families, accessing a shelter site, consistent and reliable accommodations while sheltering at (name of church) and to give (name of church) assurance, support and ownership of responsibility provided as part of the Religious Coalition Emergency Family Shelter Program.

Concept: Local Frederick County churches will provide emergency overnight shelter for 7 total nights from Sunday evening to Saturday evening for 5-8 homeless families not to exceed 20 individuals. Families are screened by the Religious Coalition and are able to stay for a maximum of 90 total days in the program. The sheltering responsibility for all hosts sites is one week per quarter or 4 weeks per year.

Participants: This MOU includes the following organizations and individuals as participants:

1. The Religious Coalition, RCEFS Director, Staff and volunteers
2. (Name of church) and its Site Coordinator and volunteers

RCEFS Will:

1. Train the (name of church) Site Coordinator prior to the first day of shelter responsibility.
2. Conduct volunteer trainings, both prior to the first day of responsibility as well as training as requested or needed.
3. Move in and transfer all overnight equipment, storage, bedding and sleeping mats the morning of the first overnight and will remove all equipment the morning after the last overnight
4. Screen, register, and monitor overnight residents admitted to the shelter program. Screening will include verification of each guest's criminal background. A criminal background check will also occur for every volunteer and staff member to ensure that no one has been convicted for any sex offense or violent crime.
5. Provide sleeping mats and cots for all overnight guests
6. Consult on behavioral, programmatic, or disciplinary action with the Site Coordinator as identified by RCEFS Director or Case manager
7. Provide a paid staff member to the evening and overnight shifts

8. Fill gaps of volunteer need at a host site with an insufficient number of volunteers.
9. Provide resident transportation to and all shelter sites (Day & Evening) as needed

(Host Church Name) Will:

1. Identify a church member to serve as the Site Coordinator.
2. Identify a church member to serve on the RCEFS advisory committee
3. Furnish sufficient sleeping space and restrooms to accommodate the agreed upon number of overnight guests for seven total nights for 1 week per quarter.
4. Provide 2-3 evening shift volunteers, and at least 1 overnight volunteer per night during the host site time of sheltering responsibility.
5. Open the host site prior to admission and locks the building the next morning.
6. Provide emergency communication to RCEFS Director, Emergency Services, or other designated contact person in the event of emergency

XXXXXXXX
RCEFS Director

(Church Representatives Name)
(Representative's Position)
(Church Name)

Effective Date of MOU with Initials

Effective Date of MOU with Initials



President
Keith Evans

Vice President
A. Brooks Hock

Rev. Brian Scott, Executive Director
The Religious Coalition
27 DeGrange Street
Frederick, MD 21071

Treasurer
Michelle Nelson

Dear Rev. Scott:

Secretary
Matthew Bryant

I am pleased to tell you that the rotating congregational model for homeless families continues to work well for CARITAS. In order to understand the value of congregation-based shelters, we need to know that each host site has 50 to 100 volunteers directly involved in providing an evening meal, breakfast, a sack lunch, facilitating the opportunities for showers and laundry, and providing overnight support to my staff. These same volunteers include people, who are skilled in many professions: doctors, lawyers, accountants, psychologists, social workers and other skilled professionals. In addition, each congregation provides our homeless families with fellowship and hope, something they need – many of our guests have been beaten down and they have lost faith.

Sherrie Brach
Suzanne M. Burger
Daisy Byrd
Earl C. Cox
Donna G. Edwards
Alexandra S. Fannon
Ben Howerton Jr.
Dena Frith Moore
Helen J. Ryan
Cassandra Scarborough
David M. Sylvia
H.B. Thomson III
Stevie McFadden Toepke
D. Eugene Webb Jr.
Jeffrey L. Wilt

In my professional opinion, you should not seek to lease, buy, nor rehabilitate a building for a family shelter. Federal funding is moving away from paying for shelter operations and into rapid re-housing, prevention and diversion. Over the last several years, CARITAS has seen our government funding reduced by \$200,000. Although not a cost-free option, it makes good sense to have the support of your congregations and operate a rotating shelter.

Chief Executive Officer
Karen J. Stanley

The rotating shelter will also maximize the publicity that your homeless family shelter will receive. Each host and support congregation will carry news about the homeless shelter, and you will certainly find new donors to support your organization. This collaborative approach will also strengthen your ability to attract other funding from foundations and businesses.

Programs of CARITAS

I would also tell those who are considering this project they should not rush into it. You need to develop a comprehensive plan, have commitments in writing from host and support congregations, a backup plan in case a congregation cannot host the homeless for a planned week. And, you have to make certain that each facility is adequate and make decisions on purchases of bedding, cots or mats, and more. Another thing to think about in addition to the movement of people is the movement of supplies each week to include the laundering of linens.

CARITAS Shelter
CARITAS Furniture Bank
CARITAS Works
The Healing Place

We have a great program here in metro-Richmond and are working hard to get homeless families into permanent housing. Last year, 123 families including 211 children came through our Family Focus Program and 89% were placed into the next best place for that family. One last thing that we hear often from the volunteers of the CARITAS Shelter program is that this becomes one of their congregations' key ministries and that the volunteers get as much if not more out of their experiences than our guests. For many of them, this is a faith building experience they will never forget. For the children that help as volunteers, this breaks down barriers in ways that no other hands-on ministry can. Best of luck in caring for your vulnerable neighbor.

All the best,


Karen J. Stanley
CEO, CARITAS

From: MChris1542@aol.com
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2013 11:04 AM
To: bscott@thereligiouscoalition.org
Cc: bscott9744@aol.com
Subject: Fwd: One More Favor

Karen supplied the information in an email. Use this information in conjunction with the letter. Alan

From: kstanley@caritasva.org
To: MChris1542@aol.com
Sent: 10/11/2013 10:59:55 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
Subj: Re: One More Favor

CARITAS began providing family shelter in about 1996 or 1997 which was winter-only until April 1, 2000 when we kept our doors open and became year-round for families first. We provide 52 weeks of family shelter a year so have at most 52 congregations. Not sure how many provide more than one week, but it's probably a couple. If I had to take a guess, I'd say we have 46-48 different congregations that do the families. Some do a week in the winter for singles and then a week in the summer for families. We serve families from anywhere -- mostly from the metro area -- if they present at our one portal of entry - "Homeless Point of Entry;" however, the host congregations are located in about 30% the city of Richmond, 30% in Chesterfield County, 30% in Henrico County and 10% in Hanover County. I think there is one technically in Colonial Heights and one in Goochland County, but both on the border.

Hope that helps.



Karen J. Stanley
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On Fri, Oct 11, 2013 at 10:35 AM, <MChris1542@aol.com> wrote:
Brian loves the letter. (I think it is great.) However, he would like you to add three things: 1. How long has CARITAS been providing a family shelter?, How many congregations are participating?, and Do you serve the Metro area -- city and counties? I know we are imposing on you, but this will do it and I appreciate you taking time to help us. Alan