

Orientation Handbook



COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP of WESTERN NEBRASKA

What is a Host Home?

Short-term host homes are an intervention for youth who are currently experiencing homelessness for any variety of reasons, including but not limited to family conflict, poverty, gender identity and sexual orientation. The goal of short-term host homes is to provide a safe, temporary, welcoming space. The time spent in the home will be a case-by-case basis and as long as funding allows, where the young person has time to repair their relationships with self-identified family or make decisions about other housing options with the support of a caring case manager. Providing short-term host homes are a cost-effective and successful model for preventing youth homelessness in a wide range of cases.

Eligibility and Expectations of Host Families:

All applicants must:

- Have an extra bedroom or space (providing privacy) for the youth
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- Be at least 25 years old (exceptions can be considered)
- Complete the application form, and other forms as required
- Have renter/homeowner's insurance, providing a file copy if requested
- Provide three references
- Authorize and pass background checks which include:
 - Department of Health and Human Services Child/Adult abuse/neglect registry check
 - Sexual Offender history check
- Complete necessary interviews
- Complete the initial meeting/training session

The above criteria need to be successfully completed for an applicant to be qualified as a host. Participation of applicants can be terminated at any point in the screening process if the program manager believes they are not qualified/ready to be a host volunteer. Applicants need to demonstrate a strong commitment to work with a youth to build a healthy and trusting relationship, an ability to provide a supportive environment and consistently demonstrate skills necessary to make that happen. **You will also be required to meet with a coach on a regular basis.**

Host Home Support: After approval and once hosting, volunteers are provided regular support through the Central Navigator. Training will also be offered through the Training Academy. If you locate training you are interested in, it is possible that the program can cover your costs to attend. Please ask the Central Navigator about these options. Youth involved in the program will receive ongoing support from their case managers. The main support person for the volunteer hosts is the program manager or Central Navigator, whereas the main support person for the youth is the youth case manager. The case manager will work closely with the program manager to ensure that the Host Home receives the appropriate level of support throughout participation. Participation includes scheduled and unscheduled (if warranted) home visits which will also be a part of the support system provided.

What are some questions to think about when becoming a Host Home?

- What are the 'rules' of your home? Think about sharing your living space with a youth you do not know very well. Think about the rules and expectations that will be important for that person to know (e.g. No smoking in the house). The youth moving in will also have rules/expectations of their own (e.g. knock before you enter). Most importantly, what are your non-negotiables?
- What are your expectations of the youth while they live with you? The Host Home Program is an opportunity for the youth to live in a safer and healthier environment while they work on self-determined goals, which they develop with the support of their case manager. As your relationship with a youth grows and deepens, so might your involvement re: goals/things they want to do. This is up to the youth to decide. Note: Hosts sometimes feel like the youth is not working

hard enough/fast enough/genuinely enough on said goals, regardless of how open-minded they are. The program will support and challenge you in managing your own expectations and dealing with frustrations that may arise.

- What is your financial commitment to this youth? You will be responsible for providing food for this youth for the duration of their stay. Expect your utility and groceries bills to go up. Aside from food and a supportive home, you will not be responsible for other expenses. The case manager and program manager can work with you on setting appropriate boundaries re: expenses.
- Is your living space ready for a young person? The youth must have their own room or private space. That room/space should be clean when the youth moves in. Make sure that your smoke alarms work and that you have accessible fire extinguishers. If you have alcohol in the house, it should be kept in a safe place where the youth is less likely to have access to it.

Roles and responsibilities of a Host Home parent:

- Your role is to provide a safe place, emotionally as well as physically, for a youth to stay when he/she needs an alternative shelter resource. By providing shelter, support and guidelines for acceptable behavior, your role will be like that of the extended family opening their home in time of need. Your role and responsibilities include the following:
- Provide for the basic needs and ensure safety.
 - Provide food, shelter, and care.
 - Encourage personal hygiene. The case manager may also assist with providing some hygiene supplies for the youth and transporting to medical appointments. Natural parents or legal guardians are responsible for clothing and medical care if the youth is a minor.
 - The youth should stay within his/her normal routine of scheduled events (school, sports practice, counseling appointments, employment, etc.) and may engage in appropriate social activities if prior arrangement is made with Host Home parent.
- Be aware of suicide warning signals. Keep harmful materials out of reach.
 - Have all guns unloaded and locked.
 - Lock up any medication.
- Be attentive to the youth's needs, but don't become a "therapist"
 - Utilize good listening skills.
 - Report information that pertains to endangerment of the youth.
 - Make observations, make notes if needed, and report it to staff.
- Provide a positive and emotionally healthy environment.
 - Establish clear rules and limits.
 - No physical or verbal abuse.
 - Don't use threats
 - Use language where positives are highlighted rather than the negatives.
 - No use of illegal drugs.
 - No serving of alcohol to the resident.
- Maintain confidentiality.
 - Information learned about the youth/family does not need to go beyond you unless there is indication that the youth's welfare is threatened, in which case the staff needs to be notified.
 - If the youth tells you something in confidence and you feel it needs to be reported, immediately tell him/her that the law requires you to report this information.
- Ensure that your family's needs are not neglected whenever a youth is placed in your home.
 - Try to maintain as much of the normal family routines as possible. A stable family atmosphere is as important to the youth as it is to your natural family.
 - Do not allow the youth's behavior to control your family.
 - Follow through with the expectations and guidelines you've outlined in your house rules.

Settling In:

The Host Home will provide the youth an opportunity to tour the home and learn what is "on" and "off" limits. The Host Home will be sensitive in allowing the youth some alone time in getting settled into his/her room but will be available to answer any questions with regards to home rules and schedules. If there are any other youth in the home, the Host Home should also allow time for them to become acquainted.

The youth and/or the Host Home may call the Youth Specialist at any time from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00pm. to get answers to questions or concerns. If there is an emergency, call 911.

Supervision:

The Host Home is required to provide supervision to the youth in care. In the event of an emergency, the Host Home needs to call staff as well as the police to help deal with an incident. Hold discussions with the youth about what is and is not okay regarding electronic equipment in your home. It is a good idea to set blocks on your tv cable or satellite to prevent youth from ordering pay-per-view or movies. Let the youth know that you will be supervising their tv/internet use.

School Expectations:

The staff is responsible for helping to set up adequate transportation to and from school. This may include the Host Home parent transporting the youth to school. The staff should be notified if there are any emergencies at school to assist the school personnel in resolving the situation.

Youth Rights:

- As youth placed in our Host Home you have the following rights:
 - To receive concerned and professional treatment from the Host Home.
 - To non-discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender or disability within program limits.
 - To have confidential communication with staff except in the following circumstances: when a release is signed which authorizes the disclosure to specific persons or organizations, when Host Home staff are directed to testify in civil or criminal court about the youth or youth's family, and when required by law.
 - To have contact with staff at appropriate times during the day.
 - To have contact with your attorney or probation office if applicable.
 - To file a grievance if there is a concern with the Host Home program.

Media Policy:

Due to our confidentiality policies, it is prohibited for the clients or the Host Home parents to communicate with any person in the media without first discussing with the Program Director.

Reporting Child Abuse:

- Nebraska state law requires any person who suspects that a child has been physically or sexually abused or neglected to report it promptly to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The CPS hotline phone number is 1-800-652-1999.
- What should I expect when reporting abuse or neglect? You are not required to give your name. You will be asked to give your name so that, if necessary, the Protection and Safety Worker can get more information later. As long as the report is in good faith, you are not liable. Your report is confidential. Your name can only be given to law enforcement or a court of law.
- The Department will investigate all reports of suspected child abuse and neglect that meet the screening criteria. The Department and police work together on reports and the police may also do an investigation. Due to the confidential nature of the investigation, the person who reports the abuse cannot be informed of the action taken or the result of the report

Host Home Parent Training:

The staff will provide an initial training to become a Host Home. This training should cover basic information about the Host Home program and homeless youth. We recommend that you are current with your CPR and Emergency First Aid Certification.

Please provide the staff with a copy of your current cards. If you need a renewal, inform the staff to help register and pay for your training. On-going training will be provided regularly for Host Home parents in a variety of ways: training by the staff, training provided via webinar either in your home or at the staff office, public training throughout your local area, home visits and others as desired.

Incident Reporting:

An incident report should be filled out any time an incident occurs that endangers another youth or the youth him/herself. This includes the following:

- Youth misconduct
- Injury to youth
- Seized contraband
- Fire
- Theft
- Runaway
- Suicidal talk, writing, behavior
- Drugs or alcohol use
- Property destruction
- Any other serious incident comprising the safety, security, Host Home parents or the youth in placement.

The incident process should begin with the Host Home parent calling the staff as soon as possible or 911 if applicable. Then the report will need to be filled out. The report will be given to the Program Director. Further review and follow-up will be conducted if needed.

Important phone numbers:

Program Director 635-3089 Ext # 3219

Central navigator 635-7777

Staff/Case manager: _____

APPLICATION FOR HOST HOME

Name: _____

Address: _____

(City, State, Zip Code)

Phone: _____ Home Cellular Message Work Phone: _____

(Required of applicable)

In case of emergency, contact _____

(Name, Phone #, Address)

Highest Level of Education Completed:

Less than 5th Grade 6th Grade 7th Grade 8th Grade 9th Grade 10th Grade
 11th Grade 12th Grade/High School Diploma or a GED Some College College Grad.

Current Occupation: _____

(Name & Address)

Personal References: Please list 3

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Relationship: _____

Other Information

1. Do you have any physical limitations?

Yes Please specify _____

No

2. Are you taking any medications that would impair your ability to work in certain environments?

Yes Please specify _____

No

3. Are there other adults living in the house?

Yes Please specify _____

No

3. How did you hear about us?

Posters/Flyers Internet

Referred by another agency or organization? Please specify: _____

Referred by Friend

Name: _____

TV

Newspaper

Radio

Community Action Partnership of

Western Nebraska

Name: _____

Reference Check for Host Home Parent Application

Reference Check Form Required for each Reference on Application

Name of Reference: _____ Phone Number: _____

Coach making the call: _____ Date: _____

Questions:

1). How do you know (Host Home Parent) _____?

2). Describe the program to the above named person then ask:

Do you think _____ could successfully partner with the Host Home
(Host Home Parent)

Program to provide a safe environment for youth?

Why or Why not?

Do you think _____ could be a positive influence for youth?
(Host Home Parent)

Why or Why not?

3). What are his/her strengths?

4). Where might you find areas of training needs?

5). Additional Comments:

Consent for Participation in Host Home Program

Please initial:

Youth only if 19 and older; parent/guardian if under 19.

_____ I agree to work directly **or allow my minor youth to work directly** with Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska Staff and the partner agency _____ towards independent living and goal progress.

_____ I understand that Emergency Medical Care will be rendered only under the direction of a licensed physician. I also understand that this agreement does not make the Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska or the partner agency _____ financially responsible for such medical care.

The authorization is limited to emergency room or physician's office care as approved by the resident **or parent guardian**.

_____ I agree to **or allow my minor youth to** participate in events and activities that are related to a goal plan. Following are some examples: Youth Advisory Board, Work Fairs, Group nights, etc.

_____ I agree to contact the school and ensure that the host home parent is added to the contacts for information on grades, transportation, etc.

_____ I agree that it is okay for pictures to be taken and for these pictures to be used for Posters, Thank-You Notes, Fun activities, Self-Awareness activities, etc.

Youth's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature (only if a minor)

Date

Relationship to Youth

Signature of Witness

Date

Host Home Parent Stipend Log

Host Home Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Program: _____

Youth name: _____

New Address: Yes or No

Host Parent: Please fill out the information in regards to your host home work for the month. Please check the box under entire month if the youth remained in the host home the entire month. Please fill in the prorated box with the number of days the youth was in your host home IF it was not the entire month. If the youth did not stay the entire month, the amount will be prorated depending on the number of days per month. The stipend rate for host homes per month is \$400.00 for one youth and \$450 for two youth. Sign at the bottom. Please allow up to two weeks to process for payment.

Funding Code	G/L Code	Cost Type	Dept Code	Location Code
3818	6537	676	600	700

Entire Month/Year OR	Prorated Month and # of Days	Total Due

Host Home Parent Signature _____

Youth Specialist Signature _____

Date Submitted to Finance _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Check To Be Mailed	<input type="checkbox"/> Host Home Parent Will Pick Up Check in Finance
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Host Home Program Checklist for Paperwork

COMPANY INFORMATION	
First/Last Name of Youth:	
Host Family Name:	
Name of Coach:	
Date:	

COMPLETED BY HOST FAMILY		COMPLETED BY YOUTH	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reviewed Copy of Handbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reviewed Copy of Handbook
<input type="checkbox"/>	Application Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Referral Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vendor Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consent for Services (signed by guardian if minor)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home Inspection Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reference Checks completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Background Check forms completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Background checks returned	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review of Stipend Form/Process for Payment	<input type="checkbox"/>	