

# *Stepping Out Ministries*



Transitional Housing  
Program Guidelines

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## Mission Statement

*Stepping Out Ministries* primary mission is the reduction of recidivism through a proven program model centering on accountability, personal enrichment, cultivation of integrity, and restoration through community outreach.

The impact of crime in our communities is felt two fold: both in the pain suffered by victims and the cost incurred by the state as justice is carried out. A corrections model encouraging continued rehabilitation after incarceration has been emerging in recent years. During this time, there has been a significant reduction in overall recidivism rates in Oregon since 2000 (*ODOC Report on Recidivism Trends of New Parolees - Updated May, 2011*). With statistical information confirming this trend is successful in reducing the amount of repeat offenders, programs focusing on successful reintegration back into society are an essential part of the rehabilitation process.

## Our Goals

Our goal at Stepping Out Ministries is to bring honor to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to honor you through the redemptive work that Jesus did for all mankind on the cross at Calvary. We believe in the message given to the church at Galatia by Paul the Apostle:

*“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any sin, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself lest you are also tempted”.*

*-Galatians 6:1*

With that in mind, our first goal was to establish a home where men and women can feel safe in the world and focus on the responsibilities that will enable them to find and fulfill a victorious and productive lifestyle.

## A Note on Our Rules

Though these rules do attempt to outline how you will be expected to conduct yourself while a resident at Stepping Out Ministries, they are not exhaustive in nature. While we cannot imagine every scenario that may occur we will apply these rules fairly to every resident who is here as the spirit of intent of the rule is designed.

## Admittance Criteria

Residents must fill out the forms and application and agree to abide by the rules and guidelines of S.O.M. and take responsibility for personal hygiene, meals and medical conditions. Residents must demonstrate a desire to change and possess a teachable spirit. Each person must be willing to accept responsibility for his/her actions, whether appropriate or inappropriate. One must recognize that only he can choose what he will do and how he will respond to any situation.

Residents should have their birth certificate and social security card.

## Program Fees

Some residents come to us through a referral process from one of the state or county agencies in the correctional field that may possibly provide funding for the first thirty days. After this point it becomes the responsibility of residents to pay their own program fees. The second month will be prorated to the end of that month and fees will be paid in the form of a money order or cash. After that invoices will be issued on the first of each month.

### **Transitional Housing Program Fees (Monthly):**

Single Room - \$325.00 + 7.00 House Fund = \$332.00 (\$50.00 Non-Refundable Deposit Added First Month)

Shared Room - \$295.00 + 7.00 House Fund = \$302.00 (\$50.00 Non-Refundable Deposit Added First Month)

Dorm Living - \$275.00 + 7.00 House Fund = \$282.00 (\$50.00 Non-Refundable Deposit Added First Month)

**All program fees will be paid by Money Order, Cashier's Check or Cash,** personal checks cannot be accepted.

New residents all enter into shared living initially, and then depending on both stability and seniority, will be eligible to move into private living as it becomes available. Clients will need to pay fees for their first month by the date of entry, unless they have secured funding from an alternate source. A money order paid 30 days in advance assures a bed will be reserved and available upon release.

**Program fees** are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. If payment must be delayed beyond the grace period outlined below, a **payment plan** needs to be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> instead, and a late payment fee of \$15.00 will be assessed.

A written plan must be approved and submitted by 5:00 pm on the 1st if payment will be delayed past 5:00 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Failure to turn in an approved plan on time or failure to follow these plans **may result in forfeiture of your housing**. Fees not paid on or before the 5<sup>th</sup> will be assessed a \$15.00 late fee. A late fee may be added for each failure to adhere to your plan. Remember, the payment plan is your plan.

**If you are asked to leave the program for violation of the contract guidelines you will not receive any refund or reimbursement of program fees.**

Should you provide a 2 week notice that you are moving, SOM will provide you with a pro-rated refund of any unused portion of that month, with the exception of those receiving subsidy.

### *House Fund*

A fee of \$7.00 will be added to program fees monthly for cleaning and hygiene supplies. This includes bathroom tissue, dish soap, laundry detergent, etc.

### *General Rules & Guidelines*

The following rules are in place to insure a safe and productive environment for all residents of SOM. If you choose to violate this contract then you are choosing to submit to the policies and guidelines as outlined in the disciplinary policy. (See "Disciplinary Procedures")

All residents are expected to be employed or actively seeking employment. Six applications are required daily.

You will need to turn in an employment search tracking sheet weekly, that in addition to a listing of places applied at, will list appointments and meetings that will help you in your transition, or legitimate activities may have prevented you from looking for work that day. This will help your case manager assess your progress and constructive use of time.

If you are on a pension, you will be required to either volunteer, (at your place of choice) work part-time or attend school.

- Residents are asked to perform two hours per month of community outreach service: around the homes, immediate neighborhood, church, etc. which will be arranged by staff.
- All residents participate in daily house chores. House management will distribute/assign the chores weekly.
- The front and rear doors are the only means of entrance and exit in the home except in the event of an emergency.
- Residents must abide by all laws, and any conditions placed on them by their supervising officer or the DOC.

### *Meeting Attendance*

There is a mandatory meeting of devotions or life skills as scheduled by the program staff (currently 7:00 PM till 7:30 PM, Monday, Wednesday & Friday) - this meeting must be attended unless you have verifiable work, treatment, school, or are attending a staff approved home group or AA/NA meeting (AA/NA meeting limited to once weekly).

## Curfew

- During the first 30 days of residence, clients are asked to abide by a 7:00 pm curfew unless pre-approved by staff.
- After the first thirty days, residents need to be on the property from 11:00 PM to 6:00 AM seven days a week with the exception of work, or activities pre-approved by Management.
- Your PO must provide the ministry with written permission for work-related exceptions to your curfew.
- Your PO must provide the ministry with a letter or e-mail giving you permission for any overnight offsite absences. These are limited to twice per month. Weekend Off-Sight Request forms must be filled out and approved by staff at least 24 hours in advance (usually by Thursday evening).
- Regardless of shift worked, you must sleep in your bed every 24 hour period to be considered a resident. If you fail to do so, this constitutes bed abandonment, and you can be terminated for non-compliance.
- OFFSITE STAYS WITHIN THE FIRST 30 DAYS ARE DISCOURAGED AND MUST BE APPROVED BY ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AS WELL AS HOUSE MANAGEMENT.

## Personal Area

- Personal items need to be maintained in your living space unless you are using it at a specific point in time.
- **Your personal space needs to be kept neat, clean, and orderly at all times.**
- Personal property displaying cigarette/alcohol/drug/crude language/slogans, or demonstrate gang affiliation is not considered acceptable. Please avoid suggestive materials that would put another client at risk with his treatment or PO.
- No personal TVs, DVD players or other viewing devices; cd players and mp3 players are fine, and cell phones are acceptable as well.

## Common Use Areas

- Common use (i.e. living room, kitchen, halls) need to maintain a greatly reduced volume of noise between 10:00pm and 6am.
- The use of common courtesy is expected regarding lights out in shared rooms.
- Guests are allowed between the hours of 8:00am and 10:00pm. (Friday and Saturday is extended until midnight.) No overnight guests are allowed. Please restrict your guests to the common use downstairs areas only (not in the sleeping areas, as this poses a security risk).

## Kitchen Usage

- Kitchen use is a privilege. Please clean your dishes, the stove/microwave, countertop...etc., immediately after use.
- Food needs to be kept in the kitchen (properly marked) and eaten in the dining area. Food is allowed in private rooms, but only if being immediately consumed. No food or drink (except water) is allowed in any dorm living area (this rule is designed to prevent rodent and insect infestations).
- *If you did not buy it, please do not take it.* Thievery in any form, no matter how minute the monetary value, is not tolerated, and is grounds for immediate expulsion from the program.

### *Bathroom Usage*

- You are welcome to shower between 6am-11pm.
- As a common courtesy when you are done please clean up after yourself.
- Please hang up the bath mat after you shower.
- Please remember to remove all of your personal items when you leave the restroom. Personal items left in bathrooms will be discarded if no one claims them.
- Please wipe the floor, shower, sink, and toilet when you are done using them.

### *Laundry Facilities*

- Please refrain from doing laundry during the hours of 6 AM – Midnight.
- Please be courteous to others, and not leave laundry in either the washer or the dryer.
- Please remain on the premises while doing your laundry.
- If another resident needs to do laundry and there are clothes found in the machine then the clothes can be removed and placed on top of the machine. Placing another person's clothing on the laundry room floor is rude and can be grounds for disciplinary action.

### *TV & Radio Use*

All radio programming, tapes, CD's, mp3 players, etc. need to be listened to with headphones. Common use areas can be used to play sacred (Christian) music out loud, if they are not being used for other purposes.

The television is a privilege. Because of content restrictions that can affect many of our residents, the following guidelines are in effect:

- No shows that portray nudity, display the physical abuse of woman and children, promote the dark arts or contain extreme gore and violence are acceptable.
- Volume should be maintained at a level that the room is okay with, and never higher than half way.
- Shows like Howard Stern, Jerry Springer, many of MTV's reality shows, etc. are not appropriate.

Violations of the above mentioned television viewing guidelines may result in a warning being issued to you. Continual violation without behavioral change may result in suspension of television privileges.

### *Telephone Usage*

- The house phone is mainly **for incoming and outgoing employment and social service related calls.**
- Please limit calls to ten minutes and no more than two consecutive calls.
- It is recommended that you sign up for voice mail with one of the participating community agencies to insure receiving your important messages.
- Cell phone usage is restricted from the dorms and TV viewing areas. Please be considerate and take the call out of these areas.

## Vehicle Policy

- There are no assigned parking areas. All parking is on a first arrival basis in a legal and appropriate manner.
- If you have a vehicle or are driving a vehicle that belongs to another person you must possess a valid driver's license issued by the state of Oregon. You must also possess valid proof of insurance that is verifiable and submit a copy of both to staff.
- Clients are limited to one motor vehicle each. Exceptions need to have prior written approval from administrative staff.
- Vehicles must be in running condition. All non-running vehicles must be repaired or removed immediately unless other arrangements are made in writing with administration.
- Vehicle repairs or maintenance work performed to any vehicle on the property needs the prior approval of administration.

## Employment Policy

- Residents are not be permitted to possess or store door to door sales items such as vacuum cleaners, cutlery, magazines, etc. on ministry property, as storage is limited.

## Computer Policy

Certain requirements must be met for residents to bring computers onto the property. One of these requirements is for the resident to ask for a form from the office to obtain signatures of approval and compliance from SOM and other agencies.

Computers are permitted by the residents in their personal space for the following reasons:

- Education: Must be enrolled in an accredited learning center and a computer must be a requirement of the field of interest.
- Employment: Computer must be a vital function to perform the job.

Each computer entering the house must be pre-approved by Administrative Staff, Treatment Providers (if applicable) and Parole Officers (if applicable), in writing prior to acceptance. In addition certain criteria and conditions must be met.

- DVD features must not be used on SOM property for viewing DVD's.
- Wireless features must not be used on SOM property.
- Failure to abide by these rules may result in permanent suspension of computer privileges while at SOM.

## Power Conservation

- **All light bulbs** have been (or are being) replaced with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL's). CFL's are the only light bulbs now allowed for use on all SOM property. These bulbs will be supplied by the ministry. Residents are not allowed to use their own bulbs. They must use the bulbs supplied by staff. *Violation of this policy will result in an immediate warning letter or suspension (no exceptions).*
- **Phone chargers** (as well as any other wall chargers) must be unplugged when not in use. Phone chargers consume significant amounts of electricity when not in use. Staff will inspect constantly for chargers that are plugged in and not in use. *Violation of this policy will result in an immediate warning letter or suspension (no exceptions).*

## *Storage of Personal Property*

Stepping Out Ministries is unable to provide additional storage for your personal property. If living in dorm living, all personal property must be stored in the provided storage areas (i.e. lockers, nightstands and underneath beds). Any personal property left outside of these areas will need to be removed and stored off-site.

Stepping Out Ministries maintains the following policy regarding use of personal property:

- Residents who choose to use their personal property for house use are totally responsible for replacement or repair in the event it becomes lost, stolen, damaged or broken. Stepping Out Ministries is not liable.
- Personal belongings that are left behind: In the event you choose to move out, been asked to leave or been sanctioned, a plan must be in place for the care of your belongings. Staff must receive and approve this plan in writing.

In any event, **the ministry will hold personal property for 7 days**. After 7 days the items may be donated to charity or disposed of.

## *Violations Resulting in Immediate Expulsion*

We maintain a **zero** tolerance policy towards the following, as they all pose serious security risks to our facilities:

- Soft or hardcore pornography.
- Any sexual activity between people on SOM property.
- Drug and Alcohol use.
- Fighting, abusive and or foul language.
- Threats or gestures where the intended purpose is to intimidate or coerce.
- Violation of any federal, state or local law that is considered a felony or misdemeanor of any class. Infractions of the law (i.e. "J" walking, traffic tickets, etc.) are not grounds for termination, but could be grounds for disciplinary action if severe enough.
- Theft of any sort, regardless if the property involved is SOM's or another resident's.

If a resident has left the premises and has stayed away for 48 hours, without notification to staff, it will be assumed that the resident has abandoned the bed. His property will be packed up and stored as explained in the section regarding "Storage of Personal Property".

## *Discipline Procedures*

### **Written Warnings**

1. A written warning is provided when a resident violates the contract.
2. A violation may seem small in nature but is none-the-less important to the accountability process.
3. Staff will provide the letter to the resident;
  - A. Letters will be provided and served as soon as staff is able.
  - B. It is possible that multiple letters could occur within a very short period of time.
4. Staff will provide feedback if the resident is open to listening.
5. Two Written Warnings are often (not always) provided before moving to the next level.

### **Written Citation & Suspension**

1. A Written Citation & Suspension Letter is provided when a resident violates the contract and/or endangers the safety/well-being of himself, another resident or of the house in general.
  - A. A suspension is issued on the third of any combination of warnings
  - B. A suspension may be issued immediately if staff has discussed the violation with the resident and determined that the resident is unreceptive, argumentative or disrespectful.
2. Staff will provide the resident with Written Warning/Suspension Documents and copies to the distribution indicated on the form.
  - A. Letters will be provided and served as soon as the staff is able.
  - B. It is possible that multiple Suspensions could occur within a very short period of time.
3. Staff will provide feedback if the resident is open to listening.
4. The resident will be informed in the Suspension Letter of the dates and times of the Suspension.

The same procedure for the second round of contract violations will apply; warning, second warning, and suspension. Upon the third round of violations the end result will be termination from the program.

The termination letter will specify the date and time within which the resident must vacate the property with his belongings. The resident may request for us to hold his items and we may opt to do so for a period of no more than seven days. The resident is responsible for putting his things together and moving them to the room/space being provided for storage.

## *Grievance Procedures*

- A resident may file a grievance against any staff member (working in the residence) in order to resolve problems or conflict.
- If a resident files a grievance against another resident, that grievance must be filed with the House Manager of that particular house.
- If the resident is not satisfied with the results of that grievance process he may file an appeal with the Executive Team. In the appeal the resident must clearly state the issue, what they believe the resolution should be, and why.
- If the issue or problem is with the House Manager, the grievance will go directly to the Executive Team where it will be reviewed and a written decision will be returned to the resident.
- The grievance must state clearly what the issue or the problem is and what the resident believes the resolution should be and why.

## *Appeals & Administrative Rulings*

In the event that a resident has been involved with any of the behaviors listed as “Immediate Expulsion Violations”, he may request a formal hearing to challenge this decision through the Executive Team. The probation officer, treatment provider and mental health workers will be invited as is appropriate. The request must be submitted within 24 hours of the termination. A final decision will be rendered within 48 hours and forwarded to your new address and PO.

In other areas where your behaviors have caused you to receive a notice of termination, you may request a meeting and appeal to the Operations / Housing Director. He will review your appeal, and make a final decision based on the evidence provided.

We may request a UA at any time we feel it is appropriate. Failure to comply with the request for testing will be viewed the same as a positive test, resulting in termination.

If you are asked to leave the program for violation of the contract guidelines you will not receive any refund or reimbursement of any program fees.

**Stepping Out Ministries** does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, criminal history, religion, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment. For further information about this policy, contact: Jose Chavez, Operations Director, 503-363-2805, TDD: (800) 855-2880.

