

MERCER COUNTY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING POLICY

INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The goal of the Housing Program is to assist each youth consenting to remain in care and/or youth leaving care with obtaining and maintaining safe and affordable housing. Acceptance into the Housing Program is a privilege and not a right. Each participant will be expected to adhere to all rules governing the Housing Program on a daily basis. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this agreement may result in termination without requiring a 30-day notice. Please be aware youth are **not** leasing an apartment and are a part of a program. By living at the apartment, I am consenting and willing to participate with the Mercer County Independent Living Program. Review these guidelines thoroughly and sign at the bottom. A copy of these housing rules will be mailed to participants and put in their case file for documentation.

ELIGIBILITY

- Youth must be at least 18 years of age however MCCYS IL staff may make an exception based on the needs of an individual youth.
- Participants must be willing to work with MCCYS Independent Living Program as an active participant at least once a month. Frequency of visits may increase due to the needs of the youth and apartment monitoring.
- In addition to MCCYS IL staff, participants must be willing to work with Community Counseling Center's partnership with the assistance housing program case manager.
- Participants must be able to show proof of education status, proof of employment, which will enable them to maintain the housing.
- Whenever possible, MCCYS IL staff must approve of the apartment prior to the participant moving in.
- Participants must be willing to deposit 10% of their monthly income into a savings or checking account preferably by the first week of every month. Exceptions to this can be made if it is pre-approved with MCCYS IL staff.
- Participants must be willing to develop a budget and work with IL staff regarding budgeting and money management as deemed necessary.

EXPECTATIONS

- MCCYS IL staff has the right to inspect the apartment on a monthly basis to ensure the living conditions are free of safety hazards.

Community Counseling Center (CCC) Case Manager will obtain a key to the apartment in the event is needed to gain access. I understand that I cannot give out the code to the doors that allows access to the apartments and that I am responsible for the key to my apartment and I will not make copies of the key.

- There will be a **mandatory** monthly review meeting and attendance by IL staff, CCC supportive staff, JPO staff (if involved) and the IL participant. At this time, goals will be discussed with all involved parties possibly including IL staff and providers.
- All participants are expected to be active in an educational program with passing grades and/or obtain employment of a minimum of 20-hours per week if I am no longer in school. If I am working towards my GED, I will also work towards completing my GED requirements. If I am seeking employment, I will actively conduct job searches or attend Career Links. I may be asked by staff for proof of my job searches and/or work with staff for job searching.
- Only the participant is to be residing at the apartment. Guests are permitted at the apartment but are **NOT** permitted to reside there. Overnight guests must be pre-approved. Anyone staying the night more than three-consecutive days will be considered a household member and is a violation to the housing program. All guests must be pre-approved by IL staff. Guests are not permitted at the IL apartments between the hours of 11:00pm – 8:00am. Minors (anyone under 18) must be approved by staff and accompanied by a guardian unless otherwise instructed by staff. No more than three-guests at a time. Participants are prohibited in engaging in any illegal activity or allowing visitors to participate in any legal activity.
- All participants are prohibited from knowingly or unknowingly, possessing illegal drugs, alcohol, and or weapons. Any violations may result in immediate termination from the housing program.
- If I use tobacco products, I will only use them in designated areas. I will ensure that I do not leave any remnants of use. This includes smokeless tobacco.
- I will not possess any type of weapons nor allow anyone to enter the apartment in possession of a weapon.
- Participants must be willing to deposit 10% of their monthly income into a savings or checking account preferably by the first week of every month. Exceptions to this can be made if it is pre-approved with MCCYS IL staff. In the event you have an income and failure to contribute the minimum of 10% will result in removal from the apartment. Participants will report any change in my monthly income to staff.
- I will actively look for a permanent residence as part of my housing goals. I am aware that I am part of the program for 12-months and my goal is to establish my own permanent housing. I will work with the IL Program and CCC housing staff to transition

out of the IL apartments or continue to stay in the apartment and take over the apartment independently.

- I am responsible for my own food and personal items. I must clean up after myself and keep my apartment neat and clean and free of any safety hazards. I understand that part of staying in the apartment; staff has the right to conduct a random, unannounced home inspection. If my apartment does not meet the inspection requirements, then I may be asked to address the problem.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you are to work and attend school on time. If you have a curfew set forth through another program (Juvenile Probation, etc) you need to abide by it. As an adult, you are permitted to stay elsewhere on occasion. Extended stays must be explained and approved. A prolonged absence without notification could result in terminating your apartment. If you abandon your apartment after 30-days all items left at the apartment will be disposed accordingly. This includes disposing your items in the trash or redistributing. You must make prior arrangements if someone is picking your belongings up. We are not responsible for lost or stolen belongings.
- Participants must have a working phone number at all times. (Landline or Cell Phone is acceptable). In the event your cell phone or home number is disconnected, please notify staff to inform them.
- Absolutely no pets on the property. (This includes a fish)

SUPERVISION

- Both scheduled and unscheduled apartment visits with the youth will occur throughout the length of the housing program. Monthly meetings will occur between the youth and MCCYS IL staff as well as CCC staff.

DISCHARGE

- Youth are discharged from the housing program, by either completing the 12-month program, leaving the program before completion or being terminated from the program due to non-compliance of guidelines.
- Termination of the housing program will occur if the youth is not following through with their goals and expectations and any guidelines above. Termination will result in the immediate of the program without a 30-day notice.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- In the event of an emergency, that may be housing related, the youth participating in the housing program should contact the landlord. If the youth needs to contact MCCYS IL staff, they may call the Mercer County CYS office and ask to speak to IL staff @ 724-662-3800 ext. 3125. During evening hours, youth may contact MCCYS IL staff @ 724-992-3869.

I agree with the housing program policy developed by the Mercer County Children and Youth Services Independent Living Program. I have received a written copy of this policy as well as a verbal description from the Independent Living Staff. We strongly suggest you keep a copy for yourself and an additional copy will be placed in individual files.

Youth Signature _____

IL Program Specialist _____

Witness _____

Date _____