



HOMEWARD

ALLIANCE



One Village One Family
Village Handbook

The One Village One Family Program is sponsored by:

Homeward Alliance

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Homeward Alliance is a non-profit organization that empowers individuals and families who face homelessness to survive, move forward and thrive.

How to use the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is train Village members on the specifics of the One Village One Family program and prepare them for their 6+ months as a Village member. Please carefully and completely read this handbook prior to meeting with the One Village One Family Program Manager for your *Handbook Review Session*.

Tips for getting the most out of the handbook:

- 1) We suggest reading the handbook with a highlighter and pen in hand. Highlight things that you think are important or interest you and take notes in the margins.
- 2) Following this page in the handbook, we have included a “Question Page”. We encourage you to come to the in-person Handbook Review Session with questions to ask! If you don’t understand a topic or would like more information on something, please put a note on your Question Page so the topic can be discussed with the OVOF Program Manager at the Review Session.
- 3) While this handbook is used for training purposes, it is meant to be your guide for the duration of your volunteer experience. Some pages will be helpful to revisit during your 6+ months and we encourage you to revisit your manual from time to time.



Question Page

Need further explanation? Want to chat in-person about a certain topic? Write it down here!

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Part 1: Program Overview and Schedule of Meetings

-1. Overview of the One Village One Family (OVOF) Program

Program Goals

- **Primary goal of OVOF program:**
 - To bring together members of our local community, in partnership with a sponsoring agency (Homeward Alliance), to support families experiencing homelessness find stable housing and begin to work toward self-sufficiency
- **Specific goals of OVOF program:**
 - To assist families experiencing homelessness locate and secure permanent housing
 - To support families experiencing homelessness as they regain self-sufficiency
 - To support families as they re-acclimate into the community and gain a sense of belonging and connection
 - To increase families' awareness of community resources and help them connect with services and programs to address their resource needs
 - To accompany families, listen to them, be there for them when needed

OVOF Program Participants: Definitions and Eligibility Criteria

The OVOF Program is comprised of several key partners, including:

- **Families**
 - *Definition:* A constellation of people that includes at least one dependent child under the age of 17 and either a single parent or legal guardian, a legally married couple, two or more intergenerational adults, or persons in a domestic partnership in which both parties share responsibility for the common welfare, living expenses, and financial obligations of the children and other family members
 - *Eligibility criteria:*
 - A Family may be referred by a community agency or apply directly at the Murphy Center through the OVOF Program Manager
 - The Family must have employment or other sources of stable income sufficient to pay rent and other family expenses
 - The Family must be homeless at time of application, with no current lease or ownership of a home
 - The responsible adults must have a criminal background check that confirms no felony charges for violent or sex offenses within the past 3 years

- The Family will demonstrate a strong interest in participating in the OVOF program and motivation to work to improve their situation by staying engaged with the Village
- The Family will commit to participate in the program to completion (6+ months)
- **Villages**
 - *Definition:* A group of volunteers who agree to meet monthly with a Family experiencing homelessness and – for 6 months – support that Family in obtaining and sustaining stable housing and self-sufficiency
 - *Eligibility criteria:*
 - Village members may be from community organizations, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, churches or other faith-based groups, or by contacting Homeward Alliance and requesting to be considered as a participant in a Village that is currently being formed
 - Each Village will have a designated Village Lead who will
 - Serve as the primary contact for the Family, including weekly contacts by phone, text messaging, or email
 - Coordinate communication among the Village members
 - Communicate with and update the Village Liaison and/or OVOF Program Manager on a regular basis or as needed
 - Before being paired with a Family, Village members must
 - Raise \$1500 to help a Family pay their security deposit or first month’s rent; monies raised through fund-raising activities are preferred and encouraged over personal donations by Village members
 - Complete background checks
 - Carefully read this manual and attend an in-person review and Q&A meeting with OVOF Program Manager.
 - Sign Volunteer Liability Waivers and Mandated Reporting Policy
 - Commit to participate in the program to completion (6+ months)
- **Village Liaisons**
 - *Definition:* A representative of Homeward Alliance and the OVOF Program who provides support and guidance to the Village members as they support the Family; the Village Liaison maintains regular contact with the OVOF Program Manager and provides him or her with updates regarding the Family’s progress

- *Eligibility criteria:* Village Liaisons are persons who have a formal or informal relationship with Homeward Alliance and education or other experiences related to the provision of social services, and who have prior experience as an OVOF Village member
- ***OVOF Program Manager***
 - *Definition:* The Program Manager is an employee of Homeward Alliance and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the OVOF Program, serves as a Village Liaison, and provides other Village Liaisons with needed assistance related to the provision of support to Villages, including accessing needed resources
- ***Homeward Alliance Program Director***
 - *Definition:* The Homeward Alliance Program Director is responsible for the management of the various programs that are part of the Homeward Alliance family of programs and serves as the supervisor of the OVOF Program Manager

Overview of Village Meetings

- Meetings include the following:
 - *Two 1-hour, back-to-back meetings (often done on the same day)*
 - *Orientation meeting* to learn about the Family
 - *Family–Village pairing meeting*, scheduled directly after the orientation meeting, where the Family and Village members meet for the first time
 - *Two required 1-hour meetings with Neighbor to Neighbor:* These meetings are to be held prior to the family searching for housing (Session 1) and signing a lease (Session 2); if the Family already has secured housing, these meetings are no longer required
 - *Five monthly meetings:* These 2-hour meetings between the Family and the Village members are intended to provide the Family with opportunities to share about their progress related to identified goals, define new goals, or identify areas where the Village members may be able to provide support. Meetings also may have a social component as well.
 - *Final celebration meeting:* This 2-hour meeting is intended to provide the Family and the Village a time to celebrate the Family’s successes to date

Note.

- Details about the Family–Village meetings and meetings with Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) are found in Part 1, Section 1-2
- In addition to the monthly Family–Village meetings, the Village Lead or another key Village member is expected to have ***weekly contact with the Family*** (phone, email, text messaging)

1-2. Family–Village Meetings (Including Required Meetings with N2N)

Meeting 1: Orientation Meeting (Before Family–Village Pairing)

- **Goal**
 - The purpose of this meeting is to prepare the Village for their first meeting with the Family
- **Participants**
 - All Village members, the Village Liaison and/or the OVOF Program Manager, and if relevant, a representative from the referring agency
- **Content**
 - During this meeting, the representative from the referring agency or the OVOF Program Manager will review the information they have about the Family, including the information on their Needs List (see *Appendix A*)
- **Time commitment**
 - 1 hour – immediately preceding *Meeting 2: Family–Village Pairing* meeting

Meeting 2: Family–Village Pairing Meeting (Immediately After Orientation Meeting)

- **Goal**
 - The purpose of this meeting is for the Family and Village members to
 - Meet and begin to get to know each other and develop a relationship
 - Discuss the Family’s goals
 - Identify immediate needs and action steps
 - Plan for the first monthly Family–Village meeting and any needed Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) meetings
 - The Family and Village Lead should exchange contact information
- **Participants**
 - All Village members and the Family; attendance by the Village Liaison or the OVOF Program Manager is optional
- **Suggested format**
 - Introduce yourselves and say a few words about yourself and your life – share something about yourself that might “connect” you to the Family and why you decided to become a participant in a Village – be careful not to overwhelm them (or bore them) with too much detail

- Ask questions to get to know the Family better, for example:
 - *Family history and interests*
 - How long have you lived in this area?
 - Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
 - Interests and activities (e.g., sports, movies, hobbies, entertainment)?
 - Where do the kids go to school? How is school going? What’s going well? Are there any concerns?
 - Do any of the kids go to daycare? How is that going?
 - *Employment*
 - Where do you work?
 - How many hours? What is your work schedule?
 - How do you like your job?
 - *Extended family*
 - Do you have family members nearby?
 - Where do your other family members live? Parents? Siblings?
 - How close are you to the Family? Are they supportive?
 - Are there struggles with the Family?
 - *Homelessness*
 - How long have you been without your own place to live?
 - Where have you been living?
 - What happened that led to your becoming homeless?
- Ask about the Family’s interest in OVOF and their thoughts about what might come from being in the program, for example:
 - Why did you decide to apply for the OVOF program?
 - What interested you about it?
 - What do you hope will come from being in the program?
 - How do you think we might be able to support you?
 - Do you have questions about the One Village One Family program?
- Begin a conversation with the Family about their priorities and topics or problems they want to work on first

Note. This process can involve helping the Family prioritize needs, asking the Family for thoughts about what might help to solve a pressing problem (initial steps), or suggesting resources that might help with the problem or need. For many families, finding housing and concerns about money will be top priorities.

Remember – let the Family drive the bus.

- **The Family should be making their own decisions about what they want to accomplish with the Village**
- **It is very common for the Family’s goals to be different from what the Village members think they should prioritize**
- **Your patience and understanding is critical**

- **Choose a tentative topic or focus for next meeting, based on the Family’s prioritized goals**
 - You may talk to them about the housing search assistance class and when that would work with their schedule (try to schedule within a week or two)
- **Set date, time and place for next meeting** (we recommend a neutral location)
- **Time commitment**
 - 1 hour – immediately following *Meeting 1: Orientation meeting*

Required Housing Search Meetings with Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N)

- **Before the Family initiates their housing search,**
 - The Family caregiver and the Village (one or two key members) should schedule and attend a meeting (Session 1, Pre-Housing Search) with N2N Housing Counselor at the Murphy Center or Plymouth Congregational Church (contact info next page). It’s also possible a Family will have already started a search and attended this meeting. Make sure to clarify whether they have attended and if they need to go.
 - During this training, the Family will receive the following benefits:
 - Budget counseling
 - Personalized housing action plan
 - Review of N2N’s Rental Resource Packet
 - Information about N2N’s First Month Rent Assistance program
 - Time commitment: 45 minutes to 1 hour

- **N2N's Contact Information:**

www.n2n.org

Housing Counselors have walk-in hours at the following locations:

Murphy Center for Hope, 242 Conifer St.

Walk-in hours: Monday through Thursday, 9-11am and 1-3pm

Phone number: 970-494-9940

Plymouth Congregational Church, 916 W. Prospect

Walk-in hours: Friday, 9-11am

- **When you attend Session 1, ask the N2N Housing Counselor for a “preview” of the second session and ask about their First Month’s Rent Assistance program, including the methods and timing for submitting an application**
- **Submission of the application does not actually happen until N2N Session 2 (Pre-Lease Signing) but the more you know about it at this stage of the housing search the more prepared you will be when it comes to the hectic period of time that comes near the lease signing**
- **The process will be accelerated if the Family takes with them as much of the needed documentation as they have available**

- **Before the Family signs a lease agreement**

- The Family caregiver and the Village Lead (or another key Village member) should schedule a meeting (Session 2, Pre-Lease Signing) with the N2N Housing Counselor to have the lease reviewed and ensure there are no potential issues
- The Family can also apply for First Month’s Rent Assistance during normal N2N walk-in hours, as noted above

- **In an ideal world, this session should be scheduled 5 days in advance of the lease signing/check delivery if applying for First Month’s Rent Assistance (see below) but we and they realize you won’t always have that amount of time**
- **Call and check on their availability and they will do their best to accommodate the Family**

- During this session, the Family will receive the following benefits:
 - **Resource Referrals:**
 - A discussion of Family’s needs and what agencies might be able to help
 - Contact information, when relevant, for any agencies that may be useful to the Family
 - **Lease Review:**
 - A basic reading of the lease to ensure client is able to comply with all items listed
 - The counselor will recommend any unsatisfactory items be changed and initialed by both client and client’s landlord
 - Clients should read their lease before the meeting, and come prepared with any questions
 - **Landlord/Tenant Basics:** A review of landlord and tenant’s rights and responsibilities
 - **Budgeting:**
 - A detailed review of the client’s income and expenses
 - The counselor will watch for possible obstacles to sustainability and if appropriate will recommend resources for budget counseling services
 - **First Month’s Rent Assistance:**
 - All families living in Larimer County are eligible to apply for N2N’s First Month’s Rent Assistance
 - Again, N2N **recommends** that all Families apply no later than 5 business days in advance of move-in date
- Time commitment: 45 minutes to 1 hour

- **If the Village and/or Family is not able to schedule this 2nd Session before signing the lease, N2N is still willing to conduct this training session**
- **N2N will review the lease with the Family and Village and the Family will still benefit by the review of the landlord’s and the tenant’s rights, responsibilities, and obligations**

Meetings 3–7: Five Monthly Family–Village Meetings

- **Goal**
 - The purpose of these meetings is to provide the Family with opportunities to share about their progress toward identified goals, define new goals, identify hurdles or setbacks, and identify areas where the Village members may be able to provide support
- **Participants**
 - The Family and all Village members
- **Suggested format and content**
 - **Before** each monthly meeting, the Village is expected to meet briefly (via e-mail or in person) to discuss the plans, agenda, and goals for the next meeting with the Family – **Remember, the goals are decided by the Family**
 - The topic of each monthly meeting will vary and be customized to suit each Family’s goals, needs, and priorities
 - The initial focus of the Family–Village meetings, often include the following:
 - The Family’s immediate resource needs (housing, car repairs, tires for vehicle, medical concerns) – If the Family has not yet found housing, supporting the Family in their housing search may be the Village’s first priority
 - Because stable income is a prerequisite for stable housing, budgeting and financial stability may need to precede the search for housing
 - If so, be sure to work with the Family to assess their current income and expenses (to determine readiness to take on the responsibility of a lease, absence of debt, sufficient employment or other income, or other issues that might limit potential to find housing)
 - As appropriate, consider discussing job stability and income (possible job search for better paying job or second job in family for spouse/partner); consider also if a referral to the Hand Up program of Homeward Alliance is appropriate
 - If income appears to be stable, but housing is not yet secured, be sure you and the Family schedule and attend the **required housing search meetings with N2N**
 - Ensure the Family is aware of and plans a meeting with GreenPath Financial Wellness. The OVOF Program Manager will refer the Family to GreenPath upon acceptance in the program. Incentives (such as gift cards) are offered for Family’s who complete the training in the first two months of the program.

Families must meet with GreenPath to discuss budgeting and finances, even if they already are housed; the Village may need to continue to support the Family in relation to budgeting throughout the time they work with the Family.

- Other topics may include nutrition and preparing healthy meals, job training questions and literacy goals, or parenting questions and concerns
- Many Families merely need someone to listen and support them as they negotiate their daily lives

Families consistently report the importance of the support Villages provide by merely listening to their challenges as they negotiate their daily lives

- The following Resource Guides are available for use by the Village. Guides are available by request from the One Village One Family Program Manager.
 - *Parenting Resource Guide*
 - *Financial Resource Guide*
 - *Health and Nutrition Resource Guide*
 - *Literacy Resource Guide*
- Before the Family leaves, be sure to decide on time, location, and goals for the next month
- **After** each monthly meeting
 - The Village is expected to meet to debrief and set up action steps for the next meeting
 - Village Lead is to contact the OVOF Liaison to review news, goal updates, and action steps to be taken with the Family before the next meeting
- **Time commitment**
 - 2 hours for each meeting

Meeting 8: Final Meeting—Celebration!

- **Goal**
 - The purpose of this meeting is to celebrate the Family’s accomplishments to date
- **Participants**
 - The Family and all Village members; the Village Liaison and/or the OVOF Program Manager may also want to attend a short portion of this celebration
- **Suggested format**
 - The Family and Village should choose a site and activity that will be enjoyed by all – perhaps a picnic (and games) in a park or a pot-luck meal
 - Celebrate as a whole group

- Review and acknowledge completion of the formal portion of the OVOF program and the Family's progress toward their established goals!
- Village members may want to share memorable moments from their time with the Family
- Decide next steps as a group: continue to meet on a more informal basis (set next date) or say farewells

Note. This celebration meeting signals the formal end of the OVOF Program involvement with the Family, but this does not mean that the Village members cannot continue to have contact with and meet with the Family if that is what the Family wants and at least some of the Village members are willing

- **Time commitment**

- 2 hours

Village members and the Family will be provided with final OVOF paperwork that is to be completed prior to the final celebration meeting. The OVOF Program Manager will collect that paperwork during the celebration meeting.

Part 2: Village Role, Guidelines, and Tools

2-1. Role of the Village Members

Serve as a Source of Support and Advocate

- A **supporter** is a person who encourages others (e.g., a Family) and supports them to meet their goals
 - A supporter is, above all else, someone who can listen and acknowledge the experience of the Family they are supporting
 - A supporter is willing to be there for the Family when they are in need
 - A supporter is patient and non-judgmental, always open to the Family's values, goals, and ideas, even when they differ from your own
- An **advocate** is someone who speaks (with permission of the Family) to others on behalf of the Family, for example when advocating for the Family in the housing market and for other resources they may need

Qualities of a Good Village

- Approach the Village role with:
 - A sensitivity to the Family's life experience and how it may be different from yours
 - A non-judgmental attitude and a willingness to accept behaviors or actions the Family takes that may be ones you do not like
 - A readiness to "meet the Family where they are at" – Listen to what the Family feels is important or what their needs are at this point in their journey
 - An awareness that this is their life and their agenda, not yours
 - An open heart and mind, with a readiness to listen and hear the Family's story in order to build a caring, mutual relationship
- Be open to the idea of letting go of your own values and honoring those of the Family
- Be flexible and adaptable – Maintain a positive and encouraging attitude, and be willing to try new methods or solutions, especially when things do not go as you and the Family had planned
- Communicate clearly and respectfully with each other – Demonstrate an ability to discuss differences calmly and respectfully
- Be trustworthy – Keep your word and do what you said you will do
- Maintain confidentiality and show respect for the Family
 - Never discuss personal details about the Family in a public place

- Never disclose identifying information about the Family to anyone outside the Village
- Avoid too much too soon
 - One of the most important things a Village can do is to take the time to build trust and a collaborative relationship with the Family before focusing on goals
 - When you first meet the Family, one way to develop trust could be by sharing a few things about yourself and your life, but as we mentioned earlier, be careful not to overwhelm them (or bore them) with too much detail

Do not be tempted to be a “cash cow”

- **Beyond the monies your Village contributes to the Family’s first month’s rent and/or security deposit, make all possible efforts to avoid buying things for the Family that they might want, need, or request you to buy**
- **Remember, your role is to be a supporter and advocate as you Family gains stable housing and self-sufficiency – this means supporting the Family to budget and pay for the things they want or need**
- **See Part 4 for more information about the use of the \$1500 raised by OVOF or the Villages**

2-2. Guidelines for Being an Effective Village

Ideas for Providing Effective Support

- **Maintain realistic expectations for both the Family and the Village**
 - Discuss – don't assume – what the Family wants and is willing to address and work on
 - Identify reasonable goals for both the Family and the Village
 - Clarify and agree on who will do what to work toward those goals
- **Avoid enabling the Family, and, instead, work with them to help them find realistic solutions to problems and challenges**
 - If you are working harder than the Family, that's a red flag that something is out of balance
 - Make sure the Family becomes the key player in the solution – perhaps supporting the Family to try something new, take on a new goal, or do something on their own
 - Help the Family work to find their own solutions and encourage them to take the steps to implement that solution

Remember that you provide the best possible support to your Family when you avoid paying for or doing things for them and, instead, support them to advocate and do things for themselves

- Ask them what ideas they have or what they think would help – you are very likely to find that the Family is far more aware of available resources than you are
- If needed, recommend relevant resources within the community or offer ideas for possible options; allow the Family to consider the pros and cons of each option and come to their own conclusions
- The goal is to empower the Family to act on their own behalf and leave them with a sense of accomplishment and pride

Key rules for supporting the Family

- **Focus more on building a positive relationship than on imparting knowledge or solving a problem**
- **Let go and let the Family choose**
- **Remain engaged, even if you feel the Family is “taking advantage” or if they are responding differently than you might like**
- **Be real and genuine – Share some of your own struggles in life, but not your financial resources – doing so undermines your role in promoting self-sufficiency**

- ***Keep relationships more important than tasks***
 - Being a patient and supportive listener may be the most important role you play
 - As you listen, refocus the discussion on the Family's strengths and potential, rather than past failures or disappointments
- ***Be prepared to set limits/boundaries***
 - Again, do not be tempted to pay for items the Family desires
 - Support the Family in budgeting wisely
 - Advocate for donations, rather than pay for needed items
 - Remember that you are not there to provide services (e.g., be a babysitter or a Family shuttle service)
 - Attempt to have at least two Village members present whenever you meet with the Family
 - Never be alone with a child or member of the opposite gender
 - Do not invite the Family to your own home
- ***Schedule regular meetings and maintain contact***
 - The Village Lead or another key Village member should initiate weekly contact with the Family; the Family may be hesitant to contact you
 - Be open to having the Family contact you when they need or want support
 - Be sure the Village Lead or another key Village member provides the Village Liaison with regular updates

Your Reality Check

- It is common for Village members to feel discouraged, frustrated, or overwhelmed while helping the Family
- Never hesitate to talk about your feelings with the Village Lead, other Village members, or the Village Liaison
- What is most important is that you get the support you need to put your feelings into perspective as you continue to work with the Family and the Village team

Hints for Dealing with the Frustrating Times within the Family–Village Match

- **Remember**, the Family may be dealing with forces – generational family history, culture, and lifestyle – which are far bigger than either of you. The goal of your relationship is not to turn the Family’s life around; rather, it is to be present and provide consistent support during a transitional time in their lives. The Family’s goals are often simply *survival* and *safety*. Supporting them in making choices that will bring and maintain survival and safety in their lives is a good place to focus your relationship.
- **Keep in mind** that people whose lives are in constant chaos (as is the case with several of our OVOF Families) often have fears of change and may need to create more chaos. That may be all they’ve known. Focus on their great survival strengths and when the Family is in a crisis, ask, “What are we going to do next?”, “How did you take care of that in the past?”, “How did it look when things were working?”, or “What would it look like if things were working?” This will help both you and the Family focus on positive, forward-moving steps rather than on the problem/crisis. Maybe, in time, you will be able to support the Family in making more preventative, proactive, up-front choices that will put off the crisis.
- **Don’t be too helpful** or even say to the Family, “I’m here to help you.” Help feels controlling, and when someone feels controlled, he or she will back off. Consider instead saying, “I am here to listen,” or “I am here to support you.”
- **Don’t fall into the trap of doing things for the Family**, not even identifying goals and next steps for the Family. “We” is a powerful word to use here. Ask, “What are we going to do next?” “How can we accomplish that step/goal?”
- **RESPECT is HUGE.** Let the Family know (and really believe) that you respect them.
- **Be aware of how you dress.** Try to dress in a way that will build rapport, not separate you.
- **Don’t work harder than the Family.** You need to remember that it is the Family’s job to make choices and changes in their lives and not yours. Don’t make promises of what you will do for them. Instead, focus on empowering the Family to identify for themselves each successive small step that need to be taken to move them to the next place of safety and survival. Then, be there for them as they take those steps alone – even if they are not the ones you have chosen.
- **Remember**, do not take the Family’s behavior personally.
- **If the Family starts to retreat** from your relationship, try giving them space instead of pushing harder. You might say, “I care about you, but maybe this relationship isn’t working for you. How can we be of support? Why don’t you think about it for a week?” This puts the ball in their court instead of yours.

Measure Your Successes, Not Your Perceived Failures

- Measure success by progress the Family and the Village have made, not by the goals the Family or the Village have met
- Keep in mind that setting a goal and working toward it may be a new or unfamiliar experience for the Family
- Be prepared to let go if the Family makes a decision that you judge to be unwise or that you do not agree with

Remember – Your support, friendship, engaged listening, and relationship with the Family are more important than unmet goals

Appropriate Locations for Meetings with the Family

- You are welcome to meet with the Family in any location that will afford privacy and is comfortable for the Family
 - You may use a meeting room at a church
 - You may meet in a public location (e.g., coffee house, restaurant), but do be conscious of using a location that will afford privacy and that is not too much of an expense
 - You may meet at the home of the Family if they are comfortable with that option
- The **only restriction** is that you should not plan to meet in a Village team member's home

Volunteer Hours—

Please keep track of your Village's *approximate* volunteer hours for each month. The One Village One Family Program Manager will check-in with the Village Lead at the end of each month to request volunteer hours for the entire Village. Program updates will also be provided to the Villages at this time!

2-3. Guidelines for Reporting Suspected Abuse

All persons involved in the One Village One Family Program (Director and Staff at Homeward Alliance, Village Liaisons, Village members, and other volunteers) MUST IMMEDIATELY report any and all suspected child abuse, neglect, or domestic violence to the proper authorities; this information must also be reported to the Director of Homeward Alliance (David Rout).

OVOF Village Member's Obligation

- All Village members will be informed in their training that any child abuse or domestic violence must be reported immediately to the proper authorities and the Director of Homeward Alliance (David Rout)
- If there is any concern about abuse/neglect or feeling intimidated in any situation, contact the Director of Homeward Alliance (David Rout) immediately

Child Protective Service Hotline	(970) 498-6990
National Domestic Violence Hotline	(800) 799-SAFE (7233) or (800) 787-3224
Emergency Call	911
David Rout, Director of Homeward Alliance	(970) 682-3193

Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence and emotional abuse are defined as behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other. Partners may be married or not married
- Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person
- Domestic violence includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone

ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM!

- **Victims can be of any age, sex, race, culture, religion, education, employment or marital status**
- **Although both men and women can be abused, most victims are women or transgender persons**
- **Children in homes where there is domestic violence are more likely to be abused and/or neglected**
- **Most children in these homes know about the violence**
- **Even if a child is not physically harmed, they may have emotional and behavioral problems**

2-4. Guidelines for Managing Other Challenges

Other Risk Situations

- It is important for Village members to be aware of other possible risk situations, and to report concerns to the Village Liaison for guidance about how to handle them
- Other risk situations that may arise include
 - Excessive use of alcohol/recreational drugs
 - Mental Health issues – severe depression, suicidal thoughts, violent or out-of-control behavior
- What to do:
 - ***If a threat is imminent or dangerous behavior is occurring, call the police (911)***
 - Contact the Director of Homeward Alliance (David Rout, 970-682-3193) if concerns are suspected or if an incident has occurred

Sensitive Issues Like Religion and Spirituality

- You may be paired with someone of a different ethnic background, sexual orientation, or gender, or spiritual/religious orientation than yourself
- Remember, these can be sensitive topics and should be talked about with care
- To guide you in any discussions of religion or spirituality that may come up with the Family, the OVOF program has adopted the following:

We respect the religious and spiritual views, preferences, and privacy of our families, as well as those of our Villagers and mentors. We recognize that discussions of religion or spirituality can potentially be highly emotional and personal, and we recommend that any discussion on this subject be initiated by the family to ensure that they are comfortable exploring this topic and feel it is relevant to their journey toward self-sufficiency.

When in Doubt About What to Do or How to Act

- **When in doubt, ask!!**
- Remember, the Village Liaison and the entire OVOF/Homeward Alliance team is there to support you and help you make wise decisions

2-5. Tools: Some Suggested Family–Village Meeting Ideas

- **In this section, we provide some potential meeting ideas and activities that may suit the Family’s needs**
- **None of these meetings are required as part of the OVOF program**
- **All the Resource Guides are available upon request from the OVOF Program Manager**

Family Meeting(s) Focused on Finances and Budgeting

- Keep in mind that almost all Families face challenges with finances or budgeting, even those who have never been or who are no longer homeless
- If the Family faces such challenges, consider providing them with an opportunity to discuss the Family’s financial situation and spending habits
- As part of this process, consider having the Village members and the Family complete the *Financial Resource Guide* prior to the meeting
- During your next Family–Village meeting
 - Review the entire financial guide
 - Go into detail on the Introduction, Topic One: Managing Your Money, Topic Two: Set Your Goals, and Topic Three: Develop Your Spending Plan
- Other thoughts regarding finances
 - Evaluating the Family’s financial situation is one of your first priorities, even before helping them search for housing
 - Consider the following:
 - Amount and long-term stability of income (employment, supplemental, child support, etc.)
 - Absence of poor credit, unpaid bills, or other debt
 - The Family may need support regarding establishing a realistic housing budget
 - Once they move into housing, they may need support to continue to manage their finances wisely
 - Discussing major purchases, whether they are needed, is a common need
 - Supporting them to make decisions related to repairing an old car or buying a new one also is a frequent need
 - An ideal long-term goal is for the Family to begin to develop savings; ideally, we all have 3 month’s rent saved in an emergency fund

Family Meeting Focused on Literacy and Library Visit

- When members of the Family face challenges with literacy, consider
 - Planning a meet at a library close to the Family's residence
 - Prior to the meeting, contact the library to find out resources that will be available for the Family (i.e., story time, getting a library card, signing up for classes, getting a calendar of events)
 - Some ideas for your time at the Library
 - Split up the Village with different Family members to find age-appropriate books to read at the library, to check-out, and/or to start a list of books for future reading
 - If the library has available computer terminals, learn how to sign on and use them, and visit at least two of the 'Great Online Resources' listed in the *Literacy Resource Guide*
 - Get library cards for everyone in the Family and have them check out their selections
 - If the Family is already connected with their local library, then consider providing the Family with an opportunity to talk about the importance of building literacy skills and long-term educational planning
 - Consider using the *Literacy Resource Guide* to guide a discussion about literacy
 - Consider discussing the importance of fostering early literacy habits, including having a positive atmosphere for reading that is fun, stimulating, and not school-like

Family Meeting on Parenting and Goal Review

- If the Family faces challenges with parenting, consider
 - Consider using the *Parenting Resource Guide* to guide a discussion about parenting
 - Explore with the Family their interest in attending parenting classes

Family Meeting on Health and Nutrition

- If the Family faces challenges with health and nutrition, and wants to make changes, consider
 - Reviewing the *Health and Nutrition Resource Guide*
 - Discussing the Family's grocery and cooking habits
 - Working together with the Family to create menus, review recipes, and/or go grocery shopping to actively practice new ideas

- Exploring the Family's interest in the idea of bringing recipe books, coupons, shopping tips, etc. to share with the Family
- Supporting the Family to set goals for healthy eating for future weeks, and including it in the Family budget plan
- Reviewing Topic Six in the *Nutrition Resource Guide: Comparison Shopping*

Part 3: Background Information: Culture, Poverty, and Homelessness

3-1. Cultural Awareness

Defining Culture in the Context of Homelessness

- **Culture** – a system of beliefs, values, attitudes, customs (habits and practices) and lifestyles of a particular people
- **Economic class as an example of a culture:** People living in poverty or who are homeless experience a different culture than those living with adequate resources
- Culture can affect many aspects of a person’s behavior, attitudes, and values
- A person from a different culture (e.g., living in poverty or experiencing homelessness) can “feel different” from those who are from other cultural groups (e.g., middle or upper class and living in secure housing)
- Seek knowledge and understanding about the culture or class of the Family you are supporting

Be Aware of the Limitation of a “Cultural” Perspective

- **Avoid the risk of developing stereotypes based on assumptions simply because of a person’s membership in a cultural group (ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, etc.)**
- **Every Family is different, and each family member has a different background and a different life story**
- **Always remember to ask and listen, rather than assume**

3-2. Homelessness

Common Causes of Homelessness

- Job loss
- Divorce
- Bankruptcy
- Tragedy
- Property destruction
- Mental illness
- Health related issues/medical expenses
- Substance abuse
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of education
- Domestic violence



Effects of Chronic Stress and Homelessness

- Individuals who have experienced the chronic stress of living in poverty and of experiencing homelessness **may** experience:
 - Higher economic stress
 - Lower education levels and less work experience
 - Less family and community support
 - Chaotic and stressful lives
 - A lack of good role models or role models with the time and resources to provide adequate support
 - A lack of resources to move out of low income status
 - A tendency to pull away from others and challenges trusting others
 - A hesitancy to share thoughts and feelings
 - Feelings of discouragement
 - Thoughts that no one cares or that things will never improve

- Feelings of powerlessness and inability to change
- Feelings of being slighted, left out, and marginalized
- Having limited access to resources (monetary and otherwise), and a tendency to use the resources they do have quickly to meet immediate needs or wants
- Some or all of these **may** present as challenges when working with the Family

Part 4: Finding Housing and Use of the \$1500 Raised by the Village

4-1. Tips and Tricks to Finding Housing

Be Prepared To Act Quickly

- Vacancies are extremely low, particularly for affordable housing or low-income units
- Often multiple applications arriving for vacancies, increasing competition
- Landlords may be more open to renting when a Village advocates for the Family

Items to Have the Family Bring with Them (Not All Will Apply In Every Situation)

- Application
- Housing references
- Photocopy of driver's license or ID
- Two month's pay stubs for proof of income
- Copy of referring agency's background check
- Available funds
 - Potential application fee, typically \$30–\$100
 - Potential security deposit with application – 1 month's rent
- Credit checks are often required; bring a copy of available credit check, if applicable
 - If there is known bad credit, an explanation letter may be helpful

Expectations

- First month's rent and security deposit due at lease signing, regardless of move in date
- a 1-year lease agreement is typical
- Qualifications often require monthly income equal to twice the monthly rent

Additional Considerations

- Pets
- Smoking
- Special Needs such as ADA requirements
- Housing vouchers

Strategies to Help Family Locate Housing

- Use a team approach to search and develop a search plan with the Family
- Before your start, determine what the Family is hoping for in terms of housing (e.g., size, location, what amount of rent is realistic)
- You may have to remind the Family that the \$1500 you have raised for security deposit and/or first month's rent can only be spent once (see Section 4-2 for more information about appropriate use of the \$1500 raised by the Village)
- Keep your eyes and ears open for rental opportunities
 - Cragislist (Beware of Scams!)
 - Northerncoloradorentals.com
 - Apartments.com
 - Rental Property Resource Packet from Neighbor to Neighbor
 - Friends/family – find properties before they hit the market
 - Equal Opportunity Housing: Caribou, Fox Meadows Apartments, Aspen Leaf (see below for more details)
- Consider contacting the landlord to advocate for the Family – get the Family's permission first
- The OVOF Program Manager can write a letter verifying that the Family is in the OVOF Program

Just a Few Housing Options to Get You Started

- A good option for housing is to look into places that are called "Equal Opportunity Housing"
 - These locations include Caribou, Fox Meadows Apartments, Aspen Leaf, etc.
 - Equal Opportunity Housing means that they can work with individuals with lower incomes to pro-rate the cost of their rent (i.e. 70% of market value, 50% of market value)
 - Usually these places have waiting lists, but it can be a good idea to get the Family's name on these lists
- Two other options are The Villages or CARE Housing; they are both affordable apartment communities. The Villages are run by the Fort Collins Housing Catalyst
 - Both do not have a wait list and tenants are only required to give 30-day notice to vacate.
 - This means that properties can come available very quickly at times.
 - We suggest Village members call weekly (or even daily!) to check availability.

A Few Additional Thoughts Regarding Housing

- Housing often is the primary concern and the first goal we go after, but not always
 - There may be situations where slower steps are necessary to first be sure that a new job or incoming finances will come through and the Family will be able to obtain, pay for, and stay in housing
- Guidelines for use of the \$1500 raised by the Village are summarized in Section 4-2
 - Be sure to use it with discretion
 - You may have to remind the Family that the money raised can only be used once, and, without permission from Homeward Alliance, only for obtaining permanent housing
- A release of information for Homeward Alliance staff to speak to landlord on Family's behalf is required so that we can advocate on Family's behalf or mediate if necessary

4-2. Use of the \$1500 Raised by Each Village

Appropriate Uses of the \$1500

- The \$1500 raised by the Village is intended to be used to pay for “up-front” costs that will enable the Family to secure housing
 - They generally are used to help pay for the security deposit and/or the first month’s rent
 - If you judge that it is needed, you may also use them to pay for application fees and credit checks when they are required by the rental agency
- Whenever possible, it is desirable that the Family contributes part of the funds needed for the security deposit or first month’s rent – this encourages their “buy in” to the process and fosters a sense of commitment and responsibility; the amount they contribute may just be a token contribution
- Remember, you are not expected to “spend” all of the \$1,500, but that \$1,500 is the maximum available funding for securing housing
 - If the Family’s first month’s rent was paid in full or in part by N2N and the monthly rent is less than \$1500, the total \$1500 will not be needed
- We encourage the Village to donate any unspent part of the \$1,500 to the OVOF Scholarship Fund or allocate those funds to another Family who will be mentored by the Village or another one affiliated with your church or organization
- **If the Village wants to consider the use of any of the funds raised by the Village for paying for other expenses, prior approval must be obtained from the Director of Homeward Alliance.** The use of the funds can be flexible and creative, provided their use meets the existing policies of the OVOF program.
- It is preferred that all Village payments are made by the Village directly to the landlord, not to the Family (who will then pay the landlord)
- Provided the Family fulfills the requirements of the leasing agreement, the security deposit becomes payable to the Family when they leave the property

Note. It is often the case that Villages, either during their fundraising or later when they are helping their families, ask community businesses or others for donations in the form of cash, goods, or services. In such cases, the following should be kept in mind:

If money, goods, or services are being collected by, held, and disbursed from a 501c3 entity other than Homeward Alliance (e.g., a church), the donor should be made aware that they are donating to that entity (i.e., the church) to benefit families experiencing homelessness enrolled in the One Village One Family Program of Homeward Alliance

Appendix

Needs List (from the OVOF Application)

Note. The following is part of the OVOF Application Form that all Families fill in when they apply to become part of the OVOF Program. This part of the application is typically shared orally with the Villages when they first meet the Family. The content can be very helpful in guiding the initial meeting(s).

Needs List

Clients' Name(s): _____

Social/Relational

1. What are some uncertainties or fears that you have about the Village?

2. Rate your desire for professional counseling for any difficulties in your life.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary

This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

3. Rate your need for any childcare/daycare provisions.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary

This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

4. Rate your desire for any of your children to be involved in an activity like a sport's team, school club, or recreational program.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary

This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

Economic/Educational

1. Rate your desire for guidance in pursuing child support assistance.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary

This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

2. Rate your desire for a tutor to help any of your children with difficult subjects or schoolwork.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary

This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

Physical/Material

- 1. Please describe any current mental/physical treatments for you or your family members.
- 2. What factors are hindering you from locating and/or moving into housing?
- 3. Rate your need for transportation assistance.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary
This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

- 4. Rate your desire for help in locating an affordable apartment or house.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary
This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

- 5. Rate your need for household and furniture items.

I consider this (circle one): Critical Important Desirable Unnecessary
This need is (circle one): Immediate Before 30 days 30 – 60 Days 60+ Days

Please list what you would need for your home:

- 6. If Homeward Alliance were able to help you with food, hygiene items, diapers, and clothing would you be interested in learning more about this?

Yes _____ No _____

- 7. What goals would you like to accomplish for your family?
- 8. Is there any additional information you would like your Village to know?