



Visitation House
A LOVING MATERNITY HOME

Resident Handbook

VISITATION HOUSE INC.

REVISED 04/2025

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Our Mission:

The mission of Visitation House is to provide a safe, secure, and caring environment for pregnant women in crisis and to prepare women to live self-sufficiently when they leave.

We offer safety, security, personal development, empowerment and growth for the mother. We do this through counseling, case management, positive reinforcement, community resources and assistance in reaching individual personal goals. Visitation House is a temporary home for women during their pregnancy and after childbirth.

House Policies:

The purpose of these house policies is to establish a common understanding between the Board, staff, volunteers, and the residents to ensure a suitable environment for the Visitation House to fulfill its mission. Visitation House may change, modify, suspend, interpret or cancel, in whole or part, any published or unpublished Policy, with or without notice, at its sole discretion, without giving cause or justification to the resident. Such revised information will supersede, modify or eliminate the previously existing Policy. Volunteers and residents are expected to read, understand and abide by these policies and to seek clarification from the Board President if a rule is not understood. Violation of the policies is serious and may lead to termination from the program.

Access

In order to ensure a safe and peaceful home for all of our residents and to assist our women establish new routines during this time of empowerment and growth, we have established hours for entry and exit. Each resident is provided with a unique access code to gain access to the house during approved hours. Residents must sign-in and sign-out each time they leave and return, update the In/Out board and they must provide the specific destination and a phone number and who they will be meeting. The Resident Manager may request proof at any time.

Appointments

Residents are responsible for preparing their schedule for the upcoming week. All exceptions must be approved by the Resident Manager.

Baby Policies

Sleeping Arrangements:

Babies must sleep in a crib or a bassinet. Babies must never sleep in a car seat, bouncy seat, swing, stroller, or any other kind of seat for more than 30 minutes. At no time should an infant be left alone in an adult bed.

Changing Diapers:

Please use a vinyl pad under your baby when changing him/her. Please do not change diapers on tables, couches, or any other inappropriate surface. Do not discard your baby's dirty diapers in the bathroom or kitchen trash cans. Diapers are to be wrapped in a small plastic bag and then discarded into the garbage can outside. When the house alarm is set until the morning, keep wrapped diapers in a disposal container.

Baby Monitors:

Whenever your baby is not in the same room as you (such as the baby is taking a nap) you must use a baby monitor. It is your responsibility to maintain it so that it has batteries and/or is fully charged and working properly.

Carrier placement:

No car seats, bouncy seats, or other carriers on the dining room table or on the counters.

Bedrooms

Residents sleep in the common bedroom until they are ready to deliver and must keep their area clean and orderly at all times.

Beds must be made up daily, dirty laundry kept in appropriated baskets or hampers until assigned laundry day. No personal belongings, baby supplies, paper trash may be left on the floor and garbage cans must be empty every day or as necessary. Food and drinks (other than water) are not allowed in the bedrooms except for infants. The Resident Manager performs room checks daily.

Residents must knock and receive permission to enter before entering a private bedroom.

Behavior

Everyone involved with Visitation House is expected to be honest, polite and courteous with each other. Respect for each other's privacy, property and dignity is essential to the successful operation of the program. Vulgar language, verbal abuse or any kind of aggressive behavior will result in immediate termination from the program.

Bulletin Board

The bulletin board is the hub of communications for the house. Schedules, assignments, announcements, menus and other important information is posted here and residents are responsible to check the board regularly.

Cell Phones

No calls are permitted during quiet hours. If there are any issues caused by the use of cell phones may be collected before lights out at discretion of the Resident Manager.

Phone conversations must not be held over speaker in the house .

Please do not share your phone with others.

Common area maintenance

Residents are expected to contribute to the upkeep of the house by completing daily and weekly tasks as assigned by the Resident Manager. The list of tasks and the instructions on how to complete them will be explained. The Resident Manager will confirm that the work has been completed and any work that is not satisfactory will be repeated.

Church Services

Residents are required to attend a church service of their choice each weekend.

Classes

Visitation House provides a series online and in-person classes designed to support the growth and independence of the residents and participation in all classes is mandatory. Exceptions must be approved by the Resident Manager in advance.

Computers

Computers may be used for job search, education, spiritual and personal growth, accessing community resources and personal email. Residents may not download or live stream entertainment programs of any kind, and are prohibited from visiting any adult-oriented websites including any dating services. Residents should not have any expectation of privacy while using Visitation House computers and understand that their browsing history on all electronic devices may be check at any time. Violation of this rule may result in immediate termination from the program.

Confidentiality

Confidential information includes all personal information about any current or former resident, volunteer, staff member, directly or indirectly associated with Visitation House. Confidential information shall not be disclosed by any resident, volunteers, staff member or board member to anyone outside the program for any reason.

Information that volunteers and residents learn about each other must be kept private and gossip and destructive criticism will not be tolerated by anyone associated with the program.

In the event that anyone associated with the program becomes aware of information that could impact the health and safety of another person or may impede the mission of Visitation House, they should immediately contact the Resident Manager or the Program Director to provide the information. In all emergency circumstances, please contact 911.

Curfew

Curfew begins at 10:00 PM daily from Sunday to Thursday, and 11:00 PM on Friday and Saturday. At curfew, the house alarm is set and entry fobs are disabled. Residents who fail to return to the house by curfew must contact the Resident Manager to gain entry. If work or other circumstances prevent a resident from returning by curfew, that must be communicated to the Resident Manager in advance.

Dress

Residents are expected to dress modestly and appropriately at all times, including shoes or slippers in the house. Bare feet are only permitted in the bedroom and bathroom. Garments must be of a length and fit that are suitable to the build and stature. Shorts and skirts must be at least mid-thigh. Bare midriffs and revealing tops are not acceptable. Acceptable attire is at the sole discretion of the Resident Manager.

Clothing and appropriate undergarments are to be worn at all times in the common areas or outside. Residents are generally expected to be up and dressed no later than 9 AM.

Employment

A resident without a high school diploma is required to enroll in a GED preparation class and acquire GED.

Unless prohibited by the health care provider, residents must be actively engaged in GED preparation, job search, regular or volunteer employment for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Exiting the Program

Voluntary Exit

When a resident leaves, it is expected that she will give the Program Manager two weeks' notice so that proper planning for her departure can take place such as exit interview, packing and removal of her belongings, forwarding her mail, etc. It is the resident's responsibility to pack and move all of her belongings. Anything left behind on the day she moves becomes the property of Visitation House. She also must fill out a change of address form with the US Post Office prior to leaving. If there is any reason for the Resident Manager or Volunteers to be concerned for the safety of the baby, a report may be filed

with the Department of Families and Children. All efforts will be made to notify the mother before the report is made.

Involuntary Exit:

Involuntary exits from the program are rare and only occur when a resident's behavior threatens to disrupt the operation of the program. Drug use, threatening or intimidating behavior towards another resident, employee or volunteer, disregard of visitor policies or destructive activities can result in an expedited involuntary exit. Residents who are expedited from the program will have 30 minutes to gather personal belongings and arrange transportation before being escorted from the premises. Terminated residents must coordinate with the Resident Manager within 3 days for pickup of any remaining belongings or they will be discarded.

Financial

In order to establish a realistic financial plan, residents must disclose all financial information including cash on hand or pending, debts and obligations and all bank statements upon joining the program including tax refunds, financial aid, child support and regular funds received from family, friends etc.

Residents must have a checking, savings and/or automatic deposit debit card. Residents will participate in training programs to develop a financial budget to achieve their move-out objectives.

Residents are required to apply for and maintain eligibility for all government assistance programs, including food stamps, Medicaid, WIC and other federal or state assistance program.

Employed residents are required to participate in our savings program to ensure adequate funds for down payments and security deposits when they leave the program.

Grievances

Residents are encouraged to work with each other in a respectful, cooperative manner. Residents are provided with a journal to record questions or issues. She then works on solving the issue herself and is encouraged to 'sleep on' any unresolved matters. If the issue continues to be a concern, she may discuss it at House Meeting. If issues arise between residents that can't be resolved directly with that individual, residents should report the issue to the Resident Manager.

Harmful or illegal substances

The use of illegal drugs, prescription marijuana and alcohol are strictly prohibited in the Visitation House program. Residents are subject to random drug test and failure to submit to test, or failure to the test itself will result in expedited involuntary exit.

Visitation House is a smoke-free facility and smoking and vaping are strongly discouraged. A designated smoking area is provided for residents who are not yet able to quit. Outside smoking must be completed before the alarm is set for the evening in conjunction with the Resident Manager.

All residents are subject to random drug test and must submit within 1 hour of notice. Noncompliance with a drug test request will result in immediate termination of the program.

House Meetings

House meetings are held at least monthly and attendance is mandatory. The Resident Manager will post the schedule on the bulletin board.

Hygiene

All residents are expected to shower/shampoo, brush their teeth, comb their hair, use deodorant and wear clean clothes daily. Finger nails and toe nails are to be clean and neat.

Laundry

The laundry room is open at 9:30 AM with the last load in dryer and finished by 9 PM. Laundry days will be assigned by the Resident Manager. Laundry area is to be left clean for the next resident. All lights in laundry area and garage turned off and the garage access doors are to be shut and locked for the alarm to be set. Residents are responsible for washing, drying, folding and putting away their clothes, bed linens and towels on laundry day.

Mail:

Mail is collected and distributed by the Resident Manager.

Meals:

Residents are responsible for purchasing, preparing and cleaning up after their meals. Residents will have designated space in the cabinet, refrigerator and freezer for their food. Leftover containers and baggies will be provided.

Dinner time is an important event in the program and all residents should strive to eat dinner together regularly. Residents will prepare and serve group dinners between 5:00 PM to 7:00PM Monday through Friday and should work cooperatively to prepare meals.

Personal Property

All personal belongings will be searched before a resident is permitted to move in to Visitation House. As a courtesy, items that are not needed during the program will be sealed and stored in plastic bins in the garage/designated storage area and will be return to the resident upon leaving the program. While we take all reasonable measures to ensure that residents belongings are safe, Visitation House is not responsible for anything that is lost, or damaged.

Pets:

Residents are not permitted to have pets on the premises.

Phone calls:

Residents may use the house phone to make outbound calls outside of quiet time.

Prescription medication:

All controlled substances are secured by the Resident Manager. Residents are responsible for taking their own medication and must take as prescribed.

Program Phases

Visitation House is more than a safe place to stay for you and your baby. It is a support system to help you receive the resources you need, learn parenting, life, and financial skills and achieve personal goals so you can thrive after your time here. The Visitation House Resident program is designed to provide a foundation for change in the lives of pregnant women. Women learn to be productive and balance their time between work, school, household duties, volunteer work and rest. Each woman's background, health status, and pregnancy term are different so timelines may vary, however each woman is expected to fully commit to participate in all aspects of the program.

Phase 1 is designed to allow the resident to create some distance between the circumstances that led her to us, reflect on the future she desires for herself and her family and begin to plan a new life. During Phase 2, residents are actively pursuing education, employment and other areas for meaningful self-improvement, while saving money toward future obligations. Fortified by new skills and knowledge, residents increase the time away from the program re-engaging in healthy relationships with family, friends and the community. In Phase 3, residents are developing a rhythm for themselves and their baby and continuing to save money for moving out. Residents in Phase 4 are actively planning their move-out. They are looking at apartments, considering roommates, confirming transportation and childcare plans, including backup arrangements, establishing utility accounts,

collecting, sorting and packing their belongings, securing essential furniture and arranging help for move-out day.

Phase 1: Getting your bearings (1-4 weeks)

During the orientation period you should be adjusting to living at Visitation House. You will be helped and supported at every step as you learn the rules, adjust to the new faces here, and start making new friends with the other residents.

Phase 1 Milestones

1. Learn the rules and policies of Visitation House
2. Identify one problem area in your life and plan to make it better
3. Work with Resident Manager to develop the roadmap
4. Complete autobiography journal assignment
5. Create a visual presentation of what you want for your life after Visitation House, considering family, relationship, work and recreation, faith, friends, finances, etc.
6. Find, read, reflect and write a short essay on the meaning of the scripture passage Luke 1:26-38
7. Implement plan to independence
 - a. Apply for benefits - Food stamps, WIC, Cash Assistance, Medicaid & Transport
 - b. Prepare for parenting -Healthy Start, ELC, Infant courses as required
 - c. Receive healthcare - Visit OBGYN, mental health provider if needed, follow all healthcare plans given from doctors
 - d. Spiritual Growth – Identify a local church and attend services at least weekly
8. Attend initial financial assessment/budgeting meeting and complete assigned tasks. Watch *EveryDollar* training video and set up the app. on your phone
9. Find employment - Create accounts on job sites, submit 2-3 applications per day, participate in mock interviews, secure a job or enroll in school or training, secure transportation to and from work
10. Sign up for volunteer hours

Phase 1 Restrictions

1. Resident may only leave the house for approved appointments, worship and work
2. Resident may visit with children with Resident Manager approval.
3. No visits to family or friends

Phase 2: Setting your pace (10-12 weeks)

During Phase 2 residents are expected to follow all VH rules. In this phase residents should be working on their plan for self-sufficiency and beginning to take initiative in every area. Residents should be willing to trust and openly discuss needs. In this phase residents are increasingly more responsible, reliable and should be taking ownership of their goals. Residents in Phase 2 should be employed unless otherwise given an exception.

Phase 2 Milestones

1. Complete Roadmap to Self-sufficiency at move-out date
2. Demonstrate weekly compliance with chores, volunteer hours, faith journey
3. Maintain continuous full-time employment
4. Pursue education - GED, High school or college courses, Allison Learning course, Certificate program or vocational training
5. Fulfill Roadmap requirements – 2 hours total per week of training in one the following categories
 - a. Pregnancy & Childbirth
 - b. Parenting
 - c. Financial Literacy, including establishing bank accounts
 - d. Life Skills
6. Continue Healthy Start / Early Learning Coalition appointments
7. Read, reflect and write a short essay on the meaning of the scripture passage Luke 1:39-45

Phase 2 Privileges

1. Residents may see friends and family as approved by Resident Manager
2. Residents must abide by the weekday and weekend curfews
3. Residents with no infractions may visit Blessings Closet weekly for 3 items

Phase 3: Finding your team (4-6 weeks)

During Phase 3 the residents should be becoming mature leaders, helping newer residents, taking more responsibility in the house, and for their own lives; being trustworthy. The primary focus in this phase is to develop a plan and build the momentum needed live independently.

Phase 3 Goals:

1. Demonstrate a support system through church and other approved organizations
2. Maintain secure and stable employment
3. Read, reflect and write a short essay on the meaning of the scripture passage Luke 1:46-57
4. Fulfill Roadmap requirements – 2 hours total per week of training in one the following categories
 - a. Pregnancy & Childbirth
 - b. Parenting
 - c. Financial Literacy, including establishing bank accounts
 - d. Life Skills
5. Continue Healthy Start / Early Learning Coalition appointments
6. Achieve targeted savings balance and contribute savings each payday

Phase 3 Privileges

1. Resident may sign in/out daily for approved activities while complying with established curfew

2. Resident may request weekend pass which needs to be approved 2 days or more in advance
3. Resident with no infractions may visit Blessings Closet weekly for 3 items

Phase 4: Crossing the Finish Line (4-6 weeks)

In Phase 4, residents pull it all together to successfully graduate from the program. Residents obtain permanent housing and family reunification if needed, while continuing to work and follow rules of the program. Residents who elect to continue in the Visitation House training and support program may continue to receive diapers and wipes until the baby's 1st birthday.

1. Prepare *Move out Plan* using template (Cost and timing for moving, signing lease, turning on utilities, items for new home, transportation, and actual move)
2. Obtain birth certificate for baby, initiate child support enforcement
3. Obtain safe, affordable and adequate permanent housing
4. Obtain safe, secure and dependable childcare
5. Fulfill Roadmap requirements – 2 hours total per week of training in one the following categories
 - a. Financial Literacy, including establishing bank accounts
 - b. Life Skills
6. Continue Healthy Start / Early Learning Coalition appointments
7. Locate essential furniture and other household items
8. Complete move-out activities
 - a. Exit interview
 - b. Provide forwarding address and complete change of address with medical, government and other important contacts
 - c. Clean out bedroom, kitchen cabinets, refrigerator and freezer. Discard trash. Return VH equipment

Phase 4 Privileges

1. Residents participate in cash award scholarship program based on the following values. Cash is provided on move-out day.
 - a. Move out date is no more than 30 days past target date - \$100
 - b. Savings target achieved or exceeded - \$50
 - c. No infractions while in the program - \$100
 - d. Less than 5 infractions while in the program - \$50
 - e. Nominated by 2 or more residents for
 - i. Most helpful \$25
 - ii. Most joyful \$25

Quiet Time

Quiet time is observed daily as follows:

- Sunday 9pm – 9am
- Monday 9pm – 9am
- Tuesday 9pm – 9am
- Wednesday 9pm – 9am
- Thursday 9pm – 9am
- Friday 10pm – 9am
- Saturday 10pm – 9am

Reporting

Concerns regarding the safety of a baby will be promptly reported to the Department of Children and Families by a designated board member.

Policy Violations

Visitation House uses a progressive system for course corrections

- a. Verbal Warning will be given by Resident Manager to the resident.
- b. Written Warning for second rule infraction signed by Resident Manager, resident and a Program Director.
- c. Conference Discussion with Resident Manager and Program Director to discuss continued residency and develop a written action plan for Resident success.
- d. Dismissal - Resident may be asked to leave Visitation House for the following reasons:
 1. Violent or abusive behavior toward self or others.
 2. Alcohol or drug use. Failure to agree to random drug testing.
 3. Theft.
 4. Possession or use of weapons
 5. Visitors on property without permission.
 6. Any action that jeopardizes the safety of Visitation House residents, staff, or volunteers.
 7. Consistent unwillingness to follow program policies as outline in the Visitation House Resident Handbook.

Television

Cable television is provided in the common area for use during designated hours only. The television will not be on during class, dinner or quiet time, or if the Resident Manager deems it to be a distraction to the program. Residents are encouraged to work with each

other on mutually agreeable programs. The Resident Manager's decision on the program appropriateness is final.

Transportation

Residents are responsible for their own transportation. Medicaid transportation services are available for medical appointments, and bus passes are available for limited local public transportation are available. Residents should plan their transportation at least one week in advance and discuss any challenges with the Resident Manager as soon as possible.

Visitors

Residents are not permitted to have visitors unless given permission by the Resident Manager. Approved visits will be supervised. Residents may wait in the driveway for pickup by authorized persons only.

Visits to Others

Residents are permitted to visit immediate family only with the advance permission of the Resident Manager in accordance with our Phase policy. Residents in Phase 2 or Phase 3 may request overnight or weekend visits away from the house at least 2 days prior with approval of the Resident Manager. Weekends are defined as 7pm Friday to 5pm Sunday. All tasks must be completed and inspected by Resident Manager prior to leaving on Friday.

Wake Up Times

Residents are responsible to wake up on their own at an appropriate time to be out their room by 9:00 AM. Exceptions may be approved by the Resident Manager for reasons such as work/school schedule or illness. Evidence of required bed rest must be submitted to the Resident Manager.

Weapons

Weapons in the house, on the grounds, or in any vehicle are strictly prohibited. Violation will result in an automatic and immediate expulsion and will be reported to the police.

**Visitation House, Inc.
Code of Conduct**

I, _____ hereby request to participate in Visitation House as a resident and agree to abide joyfully by the policies outlined in the Resident Handbook and any new policies that are established while I am living at the house. I understand that living with new people may be challenging, but I will respect the people, property and purpose of Visitation House and reasonably expect others to do the same.

Quick reference guide to resident responsibilities

Food

- ✓ shop for own groceries, following food stamp guidelines
- ✓ save grocery bags for diapers and personal products
- ✓ store in assigned cabinets/refrigerator
- ✓ prepare food to eat in dining room only
- ✓ use placements and disposable napkins
- ✓ clear table of dishes and crumbs, wipe and store placemat
- ✓ rinse dishes and place in dishwasher
- ✓ store leftovers in covered containers or baggies - no bowls or pots
- ✓ handwash pots and pans, dry and put away
- ✓ only baby bottles allowed to remain in sink
- ✓ leftovers must be discarded after 3 days
- ✓ no deep frying (saute' ok)
- ✓ no fast food (McD, BK, Taco Bell, etc)
- ✓ no meal deliveries (DoorDash, UberEats, etc)
- ✓ don't take someone else's food without permission
- ✓ separate glass, metal cans, cardboard and crush plastics for recycling

Health & Hygiene

- ✓ shower daily, remove hair from drains
- ✓ wipe toothpaste from counter/sinks
- ✓ hang towels
- ✓ wrap diapers and fem hygiene products before discarding
- ✓ remove personal items and toiletries from bathroom
- ✓ ensure toilet paper stock

- ✓ report any OTC or prescription medication usage

Personal space

- ✓ make your bed
- ✓ place dirty clothes and linens in hamper
- ✓ handwash soiled baby clothes and hang to dry
- ✓ fold clean clothes and store in closet or dresser
- ✓ remove empty containers and discard in kitchen receptacles
- ✓ wash crib and bed linens at least weekly
- ✓ store unneeded items in bins
- ✓ disinfect knobs, switches, electronics, baby equipment

Community membership

- ✓ sign in and out in book
- ✓ update wall chart when coming or going
- ✓ update monthly schedule on wall chart
- ✓ respond timely to text messages
- ✓ attend house meetings
- ✓ contribute to common area maintenance
- ✓ track completion of objectives through each phase
- ✓ celebrate my own progress and the progress of others
- ✓ actively and joyfully participate in community activities
- ✓ advise Resident Manager of issues or concerns that affect me or the program
- ✓ set example for newer members

Understood and agreed on this _____ day of _____, 2025

Signature