



Guest Handbook

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Guest Requirements

- Guests must be **physically, mentally, and emotionally** capable of coping in a communal environment.
- Guests must be able to take care of themselves without the assistance of our staff or volunteers.
- Guests must be **at least 18 years old**. (Coed Facility)
- Pets are not permitted.
- Guests will be required to fill out an in-take survey to help us better create programming for those in homelessness in Athens, GA.
- Guests must abide by all of the [Guest Rules](#).
- Guests in the [Overnight Shelter Program](#) must call-in and receive confirmation of their stay before arriving at the shelter.
- Guests in Abundant Life must abide by the [Abundant Life Agreement](#).



What is Available

What We Do Offer

- Evening meal provided by volunteers from the community
- Showers on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays
- Laundry on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Library of reading materials
- Information about services available in Athens
- Comfortable bed
- Safe environment
- Toiletries as needed
- Warm hats, gloves, scarves, and socks as needed
- Breakfast in the morning

What We Don't Offer

- We do not offer services to individuals without an invitation that night
- We do not offer guaranteed extended stays*
- We do not offer shelter for families with minor children
- We do not offer storage of personal belongings beyond your nightly stay*
- We do not offer excessive storage of personal belongings during your stay, to be determined by us
- We do not offer medical services of any kind
- We do not offer mail or package delivery of any kind
- We do not offer transportation services of any kind
- We do not offer financial assistance of any kind
- We do not offer food storage or to go meals

** May be offered to those in Bigger Vision's Abundant Life Program **



Guest Rules

Our Mission is to provide a safe and comfortable environment for those in homelessness in Athens, GA. That environment includes guests, volunteers, staff, etc. Anything deemed to threaten or hinder that safe and comfortable environment is subject to loss of shelter privileges up to banishment from the property.

Arrival/Departure

- Check-in
 - 6:00 - 6:10 pm and 7:15 - 8:00 pm
 - Must be in by 6:10 pm to receive dinner
- All guests be in by 8:00 pm **unless pre-authorized by management at call-in**
- Must check-in belongings immediately upon entering
- Do not enter property before 6:00 pm
 - May sit on benches and wall once your invitation has been confirmed
- Must be outside of the building by **7:00 am** with all belongings
 - Close gate behind you
 - Items left will be subject to disposal
 - Do not sit on benches or wall after 7:00 am or before 4:00 pm
- Upon leaving for any reason, re-entry is prohibited
 - Leaving early (Min. : 7 day suspension)
 - Hospital visits will require discharge papers

Cancellations/No Show/Late

- Before 6:00 pm (Min. : 1 day suspension)
- After 6:00 pm (Min. : 3 day suspension)
- No Show/After 8:00 pm (Min. : 7 day suspension)

Bedroom

- Silent Area for Sleeping, Resting, and Reading
- ONLY** the following items allowed in the Bedroom:
 - Bin, blankets, and pillows
 - Water in a clear, capped bottle
 - Books and Magazines
 - Medications (only those needed at night & must be kept in a clear plastic zip bag)
 - Cough drops and ear plugs
 - Tobacco, Deodorant, Toothbrush, and Toothpaste for use in the morning
 - Breathing machines, wheelchairs, and walkers



Banned Items

- Weapons of **any kind**
- Alcohol or Drugs
- Outside Food or Drinks
- Inappropriate dress
 - Must have a shirt, shorts or pants, and all undergarments on at all times

Conduct

- All jackets must be left in bin room or hung on the coat rack
- Must turn in all electronics by 9:45 pm
 - Do not leave phones plugged in overnight
 - Can be collected with belongings on departure
- Do not fight, argue, threaten, lie, steal, or **touch other guests for any reason** (even spouses)
- Do not play any amplified sounds
 - Headphones are provided, but audio must **not** be audible to others
- Do not smoke outside of the smoking area or between the hours of 10:00 pm - 5:30 am
- Clean up after yourself both inside and outside the facility
- Treat others with respect
- Do not solicit from any volunteer including money, rides, special help, etc.**
- Front Entrance and Outside Gates are Off-Limits** after entry
- On Laundry Nights, must be at the machines when dryer finishes
 - Missing/stolen clothes will result in loss of laundry privileges
 - Clothes left will be discarded

**Disclaimer: We may release guest stay history with state and non-profit representatives as requested.*



Overnight Shelter Program

Mission:

Bigger Vision's Emergency Shelter Program seeks to provide a safe and comfortable place for those in homelessness in Athens, GA. We do this by providing a fair and equal opportunity to stay each night via a call-in system that is held at 4:00 pm each day. Guests receive a homemade meal, showers or laundry on an alternating schedule, a comfortable bed to sleep on, as well as breakfast in the morning.

Details:

Guests are able to call-in each day at 4:00 pm to obtain shelter for a maximum of 180 days between November 1st and October 31st of the following year. Once a guest has reached 180 stays, they will be eligible to re-enter the Emergency Shelter Program on November 1st of that year.

Note: Guests must call-in at 4:00 pm to reserve a bed each night. Calling-in does not guarantee a bed for the night. Those who have maxed out their 180 days in the Emergency Shelter Program are still eligible for acceptance into Abundant Life and able to stay during Overflow Operations.

How to Participate:

Call (706) 340-6062 ext. 2 at 4:00 pm daily to reserve a bed for that evening.



The Abundant Life Program

The Mission:

The Abundant Life program strives to empower those experiencing homelessness toward stable housing through educational and employment goals. We aim to accomplish this by providing sustainable housing, and basic resources, while participants gain skills, financially save, and plan for their future.

The Steps to Join:

Step 1: Come to an Informational Meeting

- Informational meetings are scheduled at least 24 hours in advance based on the Executive Director and participant's schedule. To schedule a meeting, call or stop by between 8:00am and 3:45pm.
- Participants must arrive on time to their appointment, or the appointment will be rescheduled for another day. This means if the participant shows up one minute late, the meeting will be rescheduled for another day.
- All meetings will be individualized and last no more than 20 minutes, if another informational meeting needs to be scheduled, it can be based upon the Executive Director and participant's needs.

Step 2: Meet/Complete the Qualifications

- Complete the Intake Interview
 - The intake interview will take up to one-hour and will be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance based upon the Executive Director and participant's schedule.
- Acceptance or Confirmation of a Pathway
 - GED Program (e.g. Athens Technical College)
 - Certificate or Degree Program (e.g. Athens Technical College, Workforce Innovators of America)
 - Full-Time Employment
 - Awaiting Military Enlistment
- Pass a Drug Screen



The Privileges:

Abundant Life participants will gain the following privileges:

- ❑ Guaranteed shelter, two meals (dinner & breakfast), laundry services, and shower services everyday while in the program.
- ❑ A space to leave belongings (with limitations) on site.
- ❑ Case management services provided by a master level social worker.

The Expectations:

Abundant Life participants will be expected to follow the following rules:

- ❑ General Rules:
 - ❑ Participants must follow the same rules as a standard guest, in addition to the rules of the Abundant Life program and their pathway agency.
 - ❑ A rule violation (either on site or at the pathways' site) will potentially result in immediate dismissal from the program. If dismissed from the program, standard penalties will apply in addition to 30 days for the purposes of staying in the Overnight Shelter Program.
 - ❑ If a participant is dismissed from a pathway, the participant will be immediately dismissed from the Abundant Life program. Any day(s) a participant stays with us during Abundant Life, will count against their 180 stay limit if they are dismissed from the program.
- ❑ Check-In Rules:
 - ❑ Participants must be checked in by 6:00pm to receive dinner (exceptions can be made dependent on pathway schedules). If a participant does not want dinner, participants must be checked in by 8:00pm to sleep at the shelter for the night.
 - ❑ Participants can schedule to sleep off-site (e.g. visiting family, friends, etc.); however, this must be communicated to the Executive Director in advance (no later than 12:00pm on the day of outing). Also, all of the participant's belongings must be removed from the bed to allow another guest to sleep there for the night.
- ❑ Drug and Alcohol Rules:
 - ❑ Illegal substances and alcohol are not tolerated at any time. Drug tests will be given randomly and failure to pass a drug test will result in immediate dismissal from the program.



Respect Rules:

- Discrimination in **any** form will not be tolerated. This means participants are expected to be respectful of others, which includes but is not limited to race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status. Any form of discrimination displayed by a participant will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Readmittance Rules:

- Participants may be readmitted into the Abundant Life program at the Executive Director's discretion. To be readmitted, the participant must follow the standard procedures for admittance (this includes waiting for their stay penalty to be lifted), in addition to developing a plan to prevent future violations based on their past transgressions.

The Daily Responsibilities:

Abundant Life participants will be expected to engage in daily responsibilities on a scheduled basis, where one of the below tasks will be assigned to be completed each day (regardless of if the participant stayed the night at Bigger Vision or not).

- Vacuum Carpets & Bed Washing
- Wash Tables and Chairs
- Sweep/Mop Floors
- Bathroom
- Washing Dishes & Deck/Yard Care
- Laundry & Bin Room Cleaning

Failure to complete a chore, complete a chore correctly, and/or complete a chore in a timely manner, can result in dismissal from the program.

The Case Management Services:

Abundant Life participants will receive case management services to assist in the process of moving toward stability and to verify progress in the program. The below goals will be addressed, but additional goals may be added based on the participant's interest.

- Financial
 - Employment
 - Housing
 - Savings
- Education
- Mental Health
- Other (determined by participant)



Case management will occur once per week on a scheduled basis based upon the Executive Director and participant's schedule. It is the participant's responsibility to arrive at case management appointments on time or reschedule case management appointments in advance (must be rescheduled before the day of the appointment, though exceptions can be made based on the situation). Failure to do so can result in dismissal from the program.

It is the expectation that participants will demonstrate progress (and provide verification) in goals each week. Failure to complete necessary steps will result in a warning of dismissal. After two weeks of delayed progress, participants can be dismissed from the program with a minimum penalty of 30 days.

The Next Stage - After Abundant Life

Successful termination from the Abundant Life program means that a participant has secured employment and housing. Once a participant graduates the following steps will occur:

- ❑ Step 1: Exit Interview
- ❑ Step 2: Graduation Celebration
- ❑ Step 3: Continued Case Management Services
 - ❑ After graduation from the Abundant Life Program, graduates will continue to engage in weekly case management for 3 months. This will be a combination of house visits, phone calls, and stop-bys. The same goals will be addressed with a focus on stability.

Abundant Life Agreement

By signing the below line, I understand and agree to follow any and all rules outlined in the above agreement for the Abundant Life program at Bigger Vision. I also understand that the above agreement is open to adjustments and revisions can be made to the agreement at any time.

Name _____ Date _____

