



2019/2020

**Ogden Avenue
Supportive Housing**

Front Desk Manual

*Our mission is to help vulnerable individuals stabilize their lives
through housing and supportive services.*

Office Locations:

Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing
9601 Ogden Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525

St. Mark's Daytime Support Center
11005 South 76th Avenue
Worth, IL 60482

708.354.0858

www.beds-plus.org



WELCOME VOLUNTEERS!

Whether you are a volunteer, intern, temporary staff or evening and weekend worker, we are so happy you made the decision to help at the Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing. Assisting at the front desk is a critical part of making this special place operate smoothly and keeping everyone safe. We thank you and appreciate your commitment and support.

Over ten years ago, leaders at BEDS Plus had the vision of providing affordable and permeant housing for those clients staying at the emergency overnight shelter with little hope of finding their own place due to disability and limited income. Thanks to the support of community members like you, dedicated donors and a hard-working housing team, the vision became a reality in 2018. Although the agency endured some opposition and an extended review period by the Village, community members and faith leaders advocated for the clients we serve and the need for affordable housing in the Village of LaGrange and BEDS Plus was granted to right to build.

The purpose of this development is to provide housing for disabled and formally homeless. Each resident has had to undergo an extensive screening process and was prioritized over the 100 or more individuals who applied because of their status as a veteran, formally domestic violence victim and/or residency in the community. Although residents are required to abide by rule outlined in their lease, we design our supportive services to help them regain their independence and heal from their past experiences. Residents have access to all of our general services and, have a devoted case manager. Our hope is the residents will take advantage of what we have to offer and live better, more independent lives in the future.

Staff Key Volunteer Contacts:

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Front Desk Volunteer Manual

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1. Overview of BEDS

The mission of BEDS Plus Care is to help homeless individuals and families stabilize their lives through housing and supportive services.

BEDS Plus Locations :

9601 Ogden Ave., LaGrange IL 60525
11005 South 76th Ave., Worth IL 60482

Programs

Homelessness Prevention Services: People who pay too much for housing, live paycheck to paycheck, and have little to no savings face a constant threat of homelessness. A crisis, such as a job loss, accident, or illness, can send them spiraling into eviction, foreclosure, or the streets. **BEDS provide direct financial assistance for rent, utility bills, security deposits, and moving costs to individuals and families at risk of losing their housing.**

Lead Staff: Joann Boblick, Manager of Stabilization Services

Emergency Services: People experiencing homelessness face immediate risks, including illness, crime, exploitation, and addiction. **BEDS Plus facilitates 15 emergency overnight homeless shelters in faith-based organizations throughout Southwest Suburban Cook County** (and receives referrals from an additional 50). Shelters provide warm meals, safe places to stay, professional case management support, and connections to housing and other resources.

Lead Staff: Mario Avila, Manager of Emergency Services

Housing Services: BEDS' housing services fall into two categories: Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing. **Rapid Rehousing targets individuals and families homeless for the first time and helps them secure housing units within 30 days of entry into the program.** It provides financial assistance for security deposits, moving costs, and rent for up to three months. **Permanent Supportive Housing offers organization-managed residences to clients with a history of chronic homelessness and disability, either at its Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing facility or 30 "scattered site" housing units.** Outside of shelters and off the streets, clients can resolve the cause(s) of their homelessness and reenter their communities.

Lead Staff: Javon Harris, Director of Supportive Housing

BEDS Plus Catchment Area

BEDS Plus provides services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in **southwest suburban Cook County**. Our service area is defined in cooperation with the HUD continuum of care, local partnerships and funding sources. Communities served include those within nine townships: **Berwyn: Berwyn Lemont: Lemont Lyons: Bedford Park; Bridgeview; Brookfield; Burr Ridge; Countryside; Hickory Hills; Hinsdale; Hodgkins; Indian Head Park; Justice; LaGrange; Lyons; McCook; Riverside; Summit; Western Springs; Willow Springs** **Orland: Oak Forest; Orland Park; Orland Hills; Tinley Park, Palos: Bridgeview; Hickory Hills; Orland Park; Palos Heights; Palos Hills; Palos Park; Willow Springs; Worth Proviso: Brookfield; Bellwood; Broadview; Hillside LaGrange Park; North Riverside; Maywood; Western Springs; Westchester Riverside: Lyons; Riverside Stickney: Burbank; Stickney Worth: Alsip; Chicago Ridge; Evergreen Park; Hometown; Marionette Park; Worth**. Individuals and households with prior or current residency within the nine township area or a significant connection (family, employment, history or purpose) may be eligible for services at BEDS Plus. Individuals outside of the BEDS service/catchment area will be referred to the suburban cook county continuum of care call center 1-877-426-6516 to identify their local provider.

2. The Job of the Front Desk Operator

A. Overview of the Job.

The front desk is the point of entry for all people visiting the Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing (OASH). The OASH building serves several functions. First, it is home to 20 formerly homeless individuals. These individuals live on the second and third floors of the OASH building in studio apartments. Second, it is where the BEDS administrative offices are located. The offices are located on the first floor in the Southwest corner of the building. Third, it is the location of the Day Center where current homeless BEDS clients can receive case management services. Finally, it provides community meeting space for LaGrange area organizations.

As a part of BEDS Plus' agreement with the Village of LaGrange, the OASH is required to meet certain safety and security protocols. The front desk must be staffed 24 hours a day (that is where you come in). The facility is also required to have external security cameras, which are controlled and directed at the front desk of the building and to do background checks of the visitors to the OASH building. We keep a record of the visitors to the property and share them with the Village of LaGrange Police Department on a monthly basis.

There are three main sources of information for people working at the front desk.

- The first is this manual, which contains instructions and information that stay the same week-to-week and month-to-month.
- The second source is the flip charts that are mounted on the wall next to the computer. These charts contain information that may change or be updated from time to time. It's important to check them for new information when you arrive each week.
- The third source of information is the three clip boards that are used to track daily activity including, guests and clients, laundry and donations. This information is maintained by the front desk operators and should be checked at the beginning of each rotation so that you know what is currently happening when you start your shift.

Additionally, you should keep the website open because it will have updated information available that may help you answer questions for clients, callers and guests.

B. Answering the Phone

The Phone: Please answer the phone, “BEDS Plus, how may I direct your call?” or “BEDS Plus, how may I help you?”

- To send the call to the appropriate person push **Transfer** then extension number or programmed station key on the right of the phone. Listen for couple beeps then hang up phone.
- If you cannot figure out who the person needs to speak with, please take a written message and then deliver it to the office. A staff person will help you determine who is the best individual to return the call.
- If a caller does not know who to speak with use this guide to forward call:

Volunteering – Volunteer Coordinator

Donations - Director of Development

Housing – Director of Supportive Housing

Eviction Assistance– Manager of Stabilization Services

Overnight Shelter – Shelter Case Manager

C. Guest and Client Check-In

Anyone entering or exiting the building besides a resident or staff person must sign in.

There is a list of individuals posted on the flip charts who are not allowed to enter the building or BEDS shelters (The Do Not Allow/DNA list). If these individuals try to enter or visit the building call a staff person immediately and the **LaGrange police non-emergency number (708) 579-2333**.

Day Center Clients:

- Clients using the day-time support center **need to sign in** at the front desk, **show their picture identification** or BEDS identification and write down their identification number on the check-in sheet.
- Clients will be seen by a case manager in the order in which they have arrived. Clients who have a BEDS ID can wait in the Day Center. Guests who do not have an ID should be shown to an open interview room to wait; no one should wait in the chairs by the front door. Case Managers will come to the front desk to check and meet with clients based on the sign-in list.

Guests of Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing Resident:

- Residents of the OASH building may also have pre-approved guests. The visiting hours are between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm. **Before the guest may enter the building, sign-in and leave their photo id at the desk.** The pre-approved list is on the flip charts. If a guest is not on the pre-approved list for visiting the facility, they may not enter until the Director of Supportive Housing, the Property Manager or the Executive Director approves them.
- Once you have confirmed that the individual is an approved guest, you should call the resident and request that they come to the lobby to accompany the guest to their unit. Guests must be accompanied through the building at all times.
- When a OASH guest leaves, they must sign-out and the front desk volunteer should check the box and return their identification.

Other Guests

- When people arrive to have a professional meeting with a member of the BEDS staff, please use the intercom to alert the staff person that their meeting has arrived. The intercom can be used by simply dialing the extension of the person you are trying to reach.

D. Mail and Packages

- Mail for OASH tenants will be delivered to their mailboxes across from the elevator.
- When mail is delivered for BEDS and day clients, it can be placed in the mail drawer. When there is a lull in activity, the volunteer should call a staff person to help sort the mail. The mail for day clients can be put in hanging folders in the drawer to the left of the chair.
- When clients or housed individuals come in asking for mail, look in the lateral file which is alphabetized by last name. If there is mail in the file for them, they must show a picture ID, sign the sheet and date it to say that they have received it.
- Packages for BEDS or tenants can be signed for and then put behind the front desk for distribution. Alert a case manager and they will help you find the recipient of the package.

E. Deliveries and Donation Drop-offs

- Food donations from local restaurants are delivered to the building thanks to a program with the local high school. Students and volunteers bring in food donations several days a week and pick up any supplies that need to go to the off-site storage location at St. Barbara Parish in Brookfield.
- Lunch donations for the Day Center are delivered daily before 11:00 am. They should bring the food directly to the Day Center and place it in the refrigerator if there is space.
- When donations or supplies are delivered for shelter from a donor or volunteer, they can be placed in the cart/bin behind the doors. **Donors should fill out a donation log** which is available on the clip board. Donations will be acknowledged by mail at a later date.
- BEDS does not accept all donations as storage capacity is limited. If you have a question about an item that someone wishes to donate that is not listed on the flip charts, talk with the Director of Development or the Volunteer Coordinator before accepting the donation.

F. Sign-ups for Laundry and Bathrooms

- Clients who want to use the laundry must have a BEDS ID and sign up on the clip board. This constitutes the "line" for using the washing machine. Each person may do one load of laundry per turn. There is laundry detergent that people may use in the laundry room supply closet.
- Only one person at a time is allowed into the bathroom. No exceptions.

G. Other Activities and Duties

- The front desk monitor keeps the TV remote control for the community room. Clients may use it to turn the TV on but must select appropriate programming and should return the remote to the front desk after they are finished.
- It is important to generally keep the front desk area neat and tidy. The front monitor may be asked to assist with special duties and projects such as cleaning up the Day Center or common areas of the OASH building.

- Keys to the front door are kept at the front desk. Please check your pockets and purses before leaving to make sure that you do not bring them home.

H. Frequently Asked Questions

Overnight Shelter

The Regular Shelter Season is from October 15 until May 15th. BEDS runs shelters in both the LaGrange area and the greater Oak Lawn area, so it's important to ask the caller which area they are looking for a shelter. Locations for each night are listed on the flip charts on the wall.

If a person calls and is looking for shelter tonight, they can come to the BEDS office before 2:00 that same day to complete an intake. If the client is not able to come on the same day to do an intake, they may be directed to the shelter for that evening, where staff can do a temporary intake. You should let them know full intake will eventually be required.

Rental Assistance

One of the ways that BEDS addresses homelessness is to help prevent evictions by providing rental assistance. Callers interested in this program can be directed to the BEDS web site, to the tab labeled "Rental Assistance" or can be sent to the Director of Stabilization Services. If that individual is not available, the person can also call the Homelessness Prevention Hotline (number is on the flip charts).

Volunteering

A person looking to volunteer for the first time in one of BEDS regular shelter roles time can fill out a profile on the BEDS website. If they are already volunteering and have a question, or they have a desire to volunteer for a single event, they should speak to the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer orientation is held on the second Monday of every month at the OASH center for those who are already registered.

Donations

Financial contribution to BEDS can be made on-line or can be directed to the Director of Development. Questions about in-kind donations, or donations of food or other items can be directed to the Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator.

Resident Privileges

Residents may use the Day Center as long as they observe the rules. Meal are provided as available with shelter clients taking first priority.

Event tickets

Tickets to fundraising events can be purchased on the website or by contacting the Director of Development or the Operations Manager.

Complaints

Complaints are a part of non-profit life. If it is their first time calling, direct them to the staff person in charge of the program for which they are having an issue. If they express that this is a repeat issue, forward them to the Executive Director's voice mail.

Parking

Parking can get tight in the lot off of East Avenue. Please feel free to park on Washington Avenue if this becomes an issue.

3. Emergency Procedures and Security

A. Door and Camera Instructions

- Keep the door to the OASH closed at all times.
- Security cameras are installed around the building in public spaces to keep everyone safe. The Front Desk operator should keep an eye on public spaces to ensure that there is no loitering or suspicious activity. The overnight operator should pay attention especially to the parking lot to make sure that no unidentified cars are parked and that no one is sleeping in a parked vehicle. The DVR log in instructions are available on the flip charts.

B. When to call Police/Ambulance

- In case of a life-threatening emergency, call the police or the ambulance using 9-1-1. Then call the Director of Supportive Housing or the Executive Director to alert them to the situation.
- In the case of an injury that is not life threatening, ask a BEDS staff person for help finding a way for the client to the emergency room or doctor or to assess the situation. If there is no staff person on site, call the Director of Supportive Housing or the Executive Director.
- If there is a disturbance with a BEDS client that is escalating and you need help from the police, call the non-emergency police number. Then call a BEDS staff member.
- If a client or guest has been asked to leave the facility, or if someone on the Do Not Allow (DNA) list attempts to enter the building, call the non-emergency police number.

C. Location of first aid and fire extinguishers

- The first aid kit is located just outside the doorway into the front desk area.
- The fire extinguisher is located in the hallway next to the elevator and across from the mailboxes.

D. Evacuation Procedures

- In the case of a fire, all residents, clients and staff should evacuate the building and meet in the parking lot of the Second Baptist Church across the street on Washington Ave. If possible, please bring the sign-in log with you when you exit the building.
- In the case of a tornado, residents should shelter in the hallways of the first floor away from any exterior windows.

Evacuation Plan

If the OASH building requires evacuation, all residents will be directed to meet at the parking lot of the Second Baptist Church across Washington Avenue. Front Desk Staff will call 911 and bring the front Desk training book which includes a list of all names and unit numbers for residents. Tenants are required to cooperate with staff and volunteers in a timely manner.

Should the building become temporarily inhabitable as a result of an emergency, BEDS will make a reasonable effort to find temporary accommodations for tenants and then proceed with the catastrophe plan outlined below.

Emergency Procedures Requiring Sheltering in Place

In the case of a tornado or other disaster that requires tenants to shelter in place, residents will be directed to either the hallways in the case of a tornado or the emergency exit stairwells, depending upon the situation.

Catastrophe Plan

In the case of a catastrophe or other occurrence that causes BEDS to no longer house people at the Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing location, BEDS will take the following actions to help mitigate the impact to the residents and the surrounding community.

- BEDS will file an insurance claim to help cover the costs of the loss and finding replacement housing for tenants.
- BEDS will work to temporarily relocate tenants to its other properties as vacancies allow. If there are not enough units in the BEDS portfolio, BEDS will work with partner organizations to locate appropriate permanent housing if the OASH building is not coming back on line and temporary housing if the units are being replaced.
- BEDS will work in partnership with the Village of LaGrange and the Lagrange Police Department throughout the process to make sure that there is communication between all parties.

4. Day Center and Common Areas

A. Day Center Rules

OASH House Rules

5. Front Desk Flip Charts

- Office locations, phone numbers and hours of operation
- List of OASH residents with pictures and cell numbers
- List of shelter addresses and schedules for the south and west systems
- List of shelter contact names and numbers
- DNA list
- Staff list with contact information
- Community and Emergency numbers
- Coordinated Entry Flyer
- Flyers for BEDS events, fundraisers and activities
- Shelter supply drives and donation needs