

Host Homes For Youth & Young Adults: Washington State Best Practices Manual




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It has been a pleasure to see how Host Homes have grown in such a short time and I hope that with this manual many new programs will emerge to provide safe and affordable housing for young people experiencing homelessness across the state.



Lori Cavender

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Introduction

The Washington State Host Home Coalition (“the Coalition”) is proud to share its Host Homes for Youth and Young Adults Best Practices Manual.

The Coalition, a network of Washington State Host Home and other homeless service providers, was formed in 2018. The Coalition’s goals are to bring the Host Home model to young people and families across Washington State, to elevate the model as a key approach to ensure that no young person is forced to sleep outside or in unsafe situations, and to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness across Washington State by building upon and expanding the Host Home model through advocacy, training, and collaboration with local communities and the state Office of Homeless Youth.

The Coalition believes that Host Homes are an innovative, community-based housing response that can prevent youth and young adult homelessness. The Coalition knows that Host Homes provide young people with safe housing options, while also helping them forge connections with caring adults in their communities.

This manual is intended to guide individuals, service providers, and communities that are interested in creating a Host Home program for youth and/or young adults. The Best Practices outlined in this manual are guided by the Six Key Elements to Host Home Program Success (see below).

This manual focuses largely on sharing best practices to support the Host Family so that Host Families can provide a positive environment for young people. The Coalition believes that intensive wrap-around case management for young people is a critical component for Host Home program success, and this manual assumes that communities looking to develop Host Home programs already support young people in this way, in a youth guided approach. Much research has been done to recognize that no matter how stable a young person is, the Host Family needs to have constant encouragement and be supported through the process slowly and deliberately each step of the way to ensure a safe and happy environment for all parties.

In addition to this manual, communities interested in launching a Host Home program should look to RCW 74.15.020(2)(o) and RCW 24.03.550 for statutory requirements regarding Host Home programs.

This manual uses the term “young people who experience homelessness” and “youth homelessness” to refer to young people ages 12 through 24 who are homeless and unaccompanied. When appropriate, the report distinguishes between youth and/or minors (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-24).

HOST HOMES FOR UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS: As viewed through the work of Ryan’s House For Youth, Whidbey Island, Washington and affirmed through the work of Mason County HOST, Shelton, Washington

Full engagement from all parties; young people, family, community members, and staff lead to great participant experiences and excellent results. Despite the compelling benefit to full engagement, many organizations will neglect the key component of full engagement because of the extra time it takes to include all parties. This mistake can lead to less than outstanding results and participants, mainly Host Homes and young people, less likely to succeed. Our historical records revealed 25 best practices,

what we call the Six Keys of Host Home Success: Protection, Education, Inspiration, Communication, Commitment, and Celebration.

Based on interviews with over 50 young people and Host Families, this manual identifies 25 best practices and highlights more than 30 examples of ways organizations can create full engagement with their communities and homeless young people following the Six Keys of Host Home Success. There are 12 standards providing additional information on a number of the leading practices highlighted in the manual.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Host Homes for Youth & Young Adults: Washington State Best Practices Manual and for your interest in beginning a Host Home program in your community or building your existing program. The Host Home Coalition is available for consultation and training. Check out the website WAHHC.org and the Facebook page or email wahosthomecoalition@gmail.com for more information.

On behalf of the homeless youth and young adults everywhere,
Thank You

Six Key Elements to Host Home Program Success

Protection Create a safe, home-like environment with caring individuals in the local community who will shield, shelter, and nurture unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults who want to finish their education and achieve future goals.

1. Establish and implement a thorough vetting process for prospective Host Families and young people
2. Provide regular and consistent Host Home safety checks
3. Ensure confidentiality of Host Home locations
4. Obtain full coverage insurance, including Professional Liability

Education Support Host Families with training, coaching, and the feedback they need to successfully support a young person out of crisis and toward healthy self-sustainability while supporting young people in their educational processes.

1. Ensure young people are enrolled in or working toward enrolling in some form of education program (GED, trade school, high school, community college, etc.)
2. Provide Host Families with basic trainings, plus specialized trainings tailored to meet the unique needs of the young people housed in the home
3. Provide Host Families with training reinforcement, support, and feedback through a 24/7 hotline

Inspiration Provide hope to young people in crisis and create a network of caring individuals that will carry them forward as they work toward their goals and achieve their dreams for the future

1. Empower young people to see their full potential
2. Provide support and encouragement to young people and work with them to develop a healthy support system
3. Develop short-term goals and activities, driven by the young person
4. Empower young people to share their stories in a way that is safe and affirming and aligned with the young person's goals

Communication Structure an avenue for healthy dialogue between young people and those who work alongside them

1. Facilitate at least two in-person meetings between a young person and Host Home Program staff before matching with a Host Family
2. Conduct daily, weekly, and monthly check-ins with young people and Host Families
3. Provide young people and Host Families 24/7 case management and crisis support
4. Provide quarterly, written reports to biological families for youth under 18 years of age
5. Craft long-term intentional plans, developed alongside the young person, that identifies goals and strategies

Commitment Commit to care for a young person's basic needs, encourage and assist with their schooling, employment, etc., and provide them with a continued support network even after transitioning into self-sustainability

1. Guarantee that all young people have access to medical care
2. Guarantee that all young people have some form of valid identification
3. Guarantee that all young people have access to food or other public benefits they are eligible for
4. Guarantee that all young people have access to education programs and school supplies
5. Guarantee that all young people are given résumé and employment search assistance
6. Provide all young people with clothing and personal hygiene products
7. Continue support to young people even after sustainability

Celebration Establish appropriate systems to measure, reward, and reinforce positive behaviors, motivate young people to do their best, and commemorate all accomplishments large and small

1. Develop Peer-to-peer connection and recognition
2. Reward goals met
3. Celebrate milestones

Breakdown of the Six Key Elements to Host Home Program Success

I. Protection

Create a safe, home-like environment with caring individuals in the local community who will shield, shelter, and nurture unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults who want to finish their education and achieve future goals.

I.1. Establish and Implement a Thorough Vetting Process for Prospective Host Families and Young People

a) Youth and Young Adults

The younger the youth, the more information is available through teachers, family, counselors, etc. Youth over 18 are harder to vet minus a thorough background check. All young people should fill out an intake with a basic needs assessment. (See attached Form A)

b) Host Family

The Host Family fills out an application (See attached Form B) and a background check for every individual residing in the home over the age of 18. Positive personal references are also required. It is also suggested that family members of the Host Family, who may have regular contact with the young person, also be screened for added security.

I.2. Provide Regular and Consistent Host Home Safety Checks

a) Each prospective Host Family is visited by Host Home program staff before a young person ever enters the home to ensure that it is safe, clean, and appropriate. The Home Safety Checklist is filled out and signed by all parties. (See attached Form C)

b) The young person will visit the Host Home, see the room they will be staying in, and meet with the Host Family and agree on house rules before deciding to move into a long-term placement.

c) The Host Home program staff will help the young person move in and get situated.

d) The Host Home program staff will conduct random visits to the Host Home after placement depending on the strength of the match.

I.3. Ensure Confidentiality of Host Home Locations

So that young people and the Host Family feel safe and secure, the biological family will not be given the address, phone number or email of the Host Family home. Biological families of minors will receive written quarterly reports (see Section 4.04) and have the

opportunity to see their child at a time that is agreed upon by the youth, Host Family, and biological family. All family meetings will be held in a public space. In small towns, where it is possible that “everyone knows everyone,” Host Home programs should do everything possible to prevent biological families from coming into contact with Host Families, for added security. Host Home programs should work with Host Families to ensure that young people are dropped off at an arranged meeting space before the biological family arrives and picked up after the biological family leaves.

I.4. Obtain Full Coverage Insurance including Professional Liability

- a) The Host Home organization is required by law to have insurance through a Washington State approved insurance company. RCW 74.15.020(2)(o).
- b) Host Families need to provide the Host Home program with Proof of Homeowners insurance for incidents in the home.
- c) It is in the best interest of the Host Home program to be fully covered with General Liability for its Directors and Officers, AND Professional Liability for all Host Home Staff.

II. Education

Support Host Families with training, coaching, and the feedback they need to successfully support a young person out of crisis and toward healthy self-sustainability while supporting young people in their educational processes.

II.1. Ensure Young People are Enrolled in or Working Toward Enrolling in Some Form of Education Program (GED, trade school, high school, community college, etc.)

The greatest way to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness is education. When Host Home programs expect young people to continue their education and provide young people with educational support (especially for those with an IEP, 504 accommodations, etc.), young people are proven to do better in their Host Home. It is important for Host Home programs to have good partnerships with their school district’s McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons, as well as advocates who can provide support to Host Families who are hosting young people with 504 plans, IEPs, or who have other special needs.

II.2. Provide Host Families with Basic Trainings, Plus Specialized Trainings Tailored to Meet the Unique Needs of the Young People Housed in the Home

- a) At a minimum, every Host Family should be trained in De-escalation Techniques and Trauma Informed Care Basics. Youth Mental Health First Aid is also a suggested training for Host Families. Other required trainings are listed in the excerpts section on trainings.

- b) Host Families should receive specialized trainings specifically designed to educate the Host Family on how best to meet the needs of the young people housed in their home. For example, trainings regarding working with young people who are diagnosed with ADHD, Bipolar Disorders, PTSD, Schizophrenia, etc. These trainings are specific to their housing situation only.
- c) The Host Home program should work with the Host Families and young people to understand the program's discipline policies so that the Host Family, young person, and program all understand the procedures for dealing with a disciplinary situation that works best for the young person's specific needs. (See attached Form D)

II.3. Provide Host Families with Training Reinforcement, Support, and Feedback Through a 24/7 Hotline

This may be the most important feature of the Host Home program. Host Families and young people need to know that they are not alone in an emergency or crisis and that the Host Home program will provide timely support. This is essential for both parties, but is most important for Host Families to feel they have a sounding board. Providing this level of support will help Host Families focus on the young person in their home and feel more successful as Hosts, which results in a more positive Host Family experience and long-term retention.

III. Inspiration

Provide hope to young people in crisis and create a network of caring individuals that will carry them forward as they work toward their goals and achieve their dreams for the future.

III.1. Empower Young People to See Their Full Potential

Most young people have been told many times that they are unworthy of love or anything positive, and they believe it. Working with young people to identify goals that the young person shapes, broken down into easy steps (the more the better), the young person will feel more successful and begin seeing their own value and ability for change and growth.

III.2. Provide Support and Encouragement to Young People and Work with Them to Develop a Healthy Support System

Help provide a counselor that the youth is comfortable with. In conjunction with the counselor, create a supportive case management team. Utilize the already supportive people in the youth's life such as family, friends, school supports, etc. Assemble these individuals together monthly, this will prove to the youth they are surrounded with support and caring individuals through life's next steps. If a youth feels encouraged, they will continue to try, if a youth doesn't have the reassurance they will often struggle and fall.

III.3. Develop Short-term Goals and Activities, Driven by the Young Person

Young people know best about what they need and want to do. Giving a young person the necessary support to decide what activities to engage in, both in school, after school hours, and after school has ended. Many young people have lived in a limited world of choices, helping them to engage in new activities and ideas can open up many new experiences and opportunities for growth and maturity.

III.4. Empower Young People to Share Their Stories in a Way that is Safe and Affirming and Aligned with the Young Person's Goals

For some young people, it is can be empowering to tell their own story. Sometimes it can bring healing to the young person and help empower them to create impactful change. Young people can advocate in their own communities to bring awareness to youth and young adult homelessness and how it looks different than adult homelessness. In some cases, young people are the best advocates for legislative change, at both state and federal levels. When lawmakers hear from homeless youth and young adults it can brings to the surface the vulnerability of this often-invisible homeless population.

Host Home programs should not make storytelling or advocacy a program requirement or expectation for young people. This process can be supported through the work of The Mockingbird Society, True Colors United, or other Host Home programs that have experience in this area. This option for youth needs to be directed by the youth and gauged by their interest in systematic change.

IV. Communication

Structure an avenue for healthy dialogue between young people and those who work alongside them.

IV.1. Facilitate at Least Two In-Person Meetings between a Young Person and Host Home Program Staff Before Matching with a Host Family

- a) The Host Home program should first meet with the young person and, if they are a minor, with their biological parents or legal guardians. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will need to sign the Parent Responsibility and Childcare Authorization Form (See attached Form E). Parent(s)/guardian(s) need to understand what they are allowing the Host Home program and Host Family to do in their stead, but also what obligations they continue to be responsible for concerning their child. The Host Home program must provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) information about the Host Family and, depending on the situation, a time and date to meet the Host Family. If mediation is possible, the Host Home program should set a date and time for those meetings. Note: If a young person is of age (over 18) they can decide if they would like someone to join them at the initial meeting. The Host Home program should encourage the young person to bring a support person with them.

- b) The Host Home program should facilitate at least two meetings between the young person and the prospective Host Family prior to moving into a Host Home. The first meeting should be held in a public space, either the program's office or a restaurant/coffee shop. At that meeting, the young person and Host Family should be allowed to ask any questions they would like of the other. No one is forced to answer questions they do not feel comfortable responding to and can either pass or share later. If the young person and the Host Family are getting along, it is up to the Host Family—not the program—to invite the young person to visit their home. (Discussed in Host Home Training) Note: It is the Host Family's house, so they do the inviting.
- c) The second meeting should take place in the Host Family's (already safety checked) home. In addition to the young person and the Host Family, the Housing Coordinator or Case Manager from the Host Home program should attend. The young person should be given a tour of the home and, most importantly, the room where they will stay. House rules should be discussed and, if time allows, the Host Home program should review contracts with the young person and Host Family and obtain their signatures. (See attached Forms F & G and H) These forms are not legal documents, nor do they claim to be, but they are intended to create good communication and understanding between the parties. These contracts are just boilerplates and should be changed to fit the needs and requests of the young person and Host Family.

IV.2. Conduct Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Check-ins with Young People and Host Families

- a) The day after a young person moves in, the Host Home program should call the young person and Host Family separately to see how things went the night before. It is always important to talk with the young person when they are alone so they can feel comfortable to fully share any concerns about their new housing situation. The Host Home program should call the Host Family and young person daily for the first week the young person is in the home and drop to every three days for a few weeks. The Host Home program case manager should do weekly face-to-face check-ins with the young person.
- b) After the young person and Host Family get settled, the Host Home program should connect twice monthly by phone with the Host Family and perform personal visits to the Host Home, as needed or requested. The Host Home program case manager should continue weekly face-to-face check-ins with the young person.
- c) It is good policy to keep the desirable amount of communication going but not so much that the Host Family is tired of hearing from the Host Home program. The Host Home program case manager should do weekly face-to-face check-ins with the young person for the duration of their stay.

IV.3. Provide Young People and Host Families 24/7 Case Management and Crisis Support

The most important feature of the Host Home program is to be able to offer 24/7 case-management. Many times Host Families and/or young people need to have someone to talk to in the evening or middle of the night. Emergency hospital-visits, curfew issues, bedtime confrontations, etc. don't happen during office hours. Due to the late hour, a sleep deprived person with tempers rising can sometimes just decide that the stress isn't worth it, which causes a Host Family or young person to just decide it is over. A phone call to a case manager usually calms everyone down until everyone can meet in the morning. Usually the situation can be resolved with a phone call and not a physical visit, but sometimes it does and sometimes it needs to be putting the youth into an emergency Host Home overnight till everyone can talk in the morning.

IV.4. Provide Quarterly, Written Reports to Biological Families for Youth Under 18 Years Of Age

Families who are going through disagreements with their youth need mediation. Many times it is unhealthy for the biological family to have direct contact with a Host Family and need the Host Home program as an intermediary. The best way to keep the communication open between biological families and the Host Family is to have quarterly reports about school, dentist and doctors appointments, etc. (See attached Form I)

IV.5. Craft Long-term Intentional Plans, Developed Alongside the Young Person, that Identifies Goals and Strategies

Young people know what they need and what they dream for their own futures. It is best to let young people direct (within reason) the plan for achieving their goals for future education, employment, and housing. Refer to Section 3.01 for a reminder that it is best for Host Home programs to make the steps short and easy to foster a strategy of success for young people.

As was stated in Section 3.03, it is important that youth help identify what their goals and dreams are and aid in the creation of their plan and direction for the future. If young people are to succeed, they need to be a part of the process. Giving young people a voice in their plan will help ensure better success.

V. Commitment

Commit to care for a young person's basic needs, encourage and assist with their schooling, employment, etc., and provide them a continued support network even after transitioning into self-sustainability.

V.1. Guarantee That All Young People Have Access to Medical Care

Unaccompanied homeless young people should be eligible for health care coverage through Apple Health (Washington State's Medicaid program). Host Home programs should help young people obtain coverage if they do not already have it. Young people should also have a local primary care physician. It can be difficult for a homeless young person to find a physician on their own, so they need assistance. Host Home programs should make sure that the primary care doctor takes the young person's health care plan. Washington Health Plan Finder and DSHS are great resources to obtain medical coverage quickly.

V.2. Guarantee That All Young People Have Some Form of Valid Identification

One of the challenges young people experiencing homelessness face is keeping important documents together and in a safe place. This means many young people do not have the appropriate identification to obtain employment, housing, or medical and food benefits. (The McKinney-Vento law allows young people to enroll in public school without any form of identification.) Host Home programs should work with young people to locate identification cards if they can be found or obtain new forms of identification so that young people have a state-issued I.D. card on them at all times.

V.3. Guarantee That All Young People Have Access to Food or Other Public Benefits They are Eligible For

Obtaining food benefits for young people can be harder to get than identification if the young person had been on a state assisted food program with their family in the past. Host Home programs should work with young people to obtain access to food benefits, even if they are ultimately matched with a Host Family. A young person may get breakfast and lunch at school (if they are enrolled), but accessing meals in the evening is often dependent upon their transportation, which can be tough in a rural setting or costly in an urban setting. Even if a young person is in a Host Home, food benefits may take an added financial burden off the Host Family.

V.4. Guarantee That All Young People Have Access to Education Programs and School Supplies

Host Home programs should work closely with the McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons in the school district so young people have access to education and school supplies. The McKinney-Vento homeless liaison can help a student enroll in school, track down

educational records, waive school fees, help with transportation, and occasionally provide school supplies. Homeless liaisons can be strong allies for helping young people access school, as well as identify who in the district needs a safe home and should be referred to the Host Home program.

V.5. Guarantee That All Young People Are Given Résumé and Employment Search Assistance

Young people experiencing homelessness may be looking for independence and to start over from the past home situations that caused their homelessness in the beginning. For many young people the road to independence and success starts with a job. Employment provides not only income, but can boost self-esteem and gives young people something to get up for in the morning, especially if they are out of school or it is summer. Community groups, like Work Source, and businesses can provide young people help in building a résumé and finding employment. Host Home programs should connect with local businesses and create a job pool where partnerships can be made. A business can contact your Host Home program first when they are looking to hire.

V.6. Provide All Young People With Clothing and Personal Hygiene Products

Creating a clothing and hygiene closet for young people is quick, easy, and inexpensive (potentially free!). If your organization or a church or service group in your area has a 10x10 or 12x12 space and some shelves, you are in business. Everyone gives clothing away and once you let the community know you are looking for items, it will come in droves. It is a great way to bolster homeless young people's dignity by giving them clothing choices. It is important to give it a shopping type feel and let them try on items. Make sure that sizes are labeled and grouped together and that your organization accepts only gently used clothing and only NEW underwear, socks, and bras for health and safety reasons. Make sure to offer things such as swim wear, prom dresses, interview clothes, etc.

It is also beneficial to have toiletries of every kind, including feminine hygiene products, shampoo, soap, deodorant, hair products, razors, sewing kits, unused make up, etc., for young people on the street and large sizes for young people in Host Families. If room allows it is also beneficial to stock tents, sleeping bags, blankets, and yoga mats (to keep the ground under their sleeping bag dry). Having these available keeps the cost low for your Host Families and allows the young people experiencing homelessness in your community to be clean and dry. Recruiting volunteers to launder clothing and clean donations beforehand helps ensure that all clothing being offered is in good shape and sanitary. Gift cards can also be collected if space is an issue.

V.7. Continue Support to Young People Even After Sustainability

A lot of people wonder why this is an important element of a successful Host Home program and for the young person. It can usually be answered with this question: Even when you were successfully "on your own," did you still rely on your support system or

family? The answer is of course, yes. We all need a support system to help encourage us when life gets hard and help us celebrate when times are good. Host Home programs should be prepared to support young people even after they have moved into a stable situation after moving out of a Host Family's home. That support may be as simple as a monthly call the first year then quarterly check-ins after that. It will differ for each young person, but young people will always appreciate that you still care.

VI. Celebration

Establish appropriate systems to measure, reward, and reinforce positive behaviors, motivate young people to do their best and commemorate all accomplishments large and small.

VI.1. Develop Peer-to-Peer Connection and Recognition

Host Home programs should find ways for young people who are living in Host Homes to connect with each other—create support groups and encourage connections between young people. Celebration can easily be identified each meeting when young people share their accomplishments. Host Home programs should have small rewards such as a snack size candy that each youth gets when they recognize in either themselves or others a specific achievement made since the prior meeting.

VI.2. Reward Goals Met

Host Home programs should work with case managers and Host Families to identify ways to celebrate young people so they can be encouraged, praised, and rewarded for meeting or surpassing a goal. It is important for young people to see that healthy adults in their lives acknowledge their accomplishments and recognize their value and determination. When young people see support from the adults in their life they will see their ability to strive for the next goal.

VI.3. Celebrate Milestones

One of the most rewarding parts of operating a Host Home program is walking alongside young people—being there to see young people graduate from high school, college, GED program, or trade school, or celebrating a young person's marriage or the birth of their child. Or sitting with them when a friend or relative dies. We all have major milestones in our development and in our lives. Every one of us needs caring people to go through these moments in life with us.

Host Home programs should identify ways to celebrate and honor young people in their program, whether it is celebrating one young person in your program for a specific accomplishment or, for example, every June celebrate all of the graduations. Host Home programs can celebrate large or small, but the important thing to remember is to celebrate often. Working with this population of young people is hard work but there are always things to rejoice in.

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Youth / Young Adult Intake / Needs Assessment Form

First Name: _____

Middle: _____

Last Name: _____

DOB (mm/dd/yy): _____

Social Security Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Gender:

_____ Female

_____ Male

_____ Gender Non-Conforming

_____ Transgender Female to Male

_____ Transgender Male to Female

_____ Other

Disability or Mental Health Diagnosis?: _____

Medication?: _____

Race/Ethnicity:

_____ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

_____ American Indian/Alaska Native

_____ Black/African American

_____ Don't Know

_____ Asian

_____ Caucasian

_____ Hispanic

_____ Do not wish to
provide information

Sexual Orientation: (Please only answer if comfortable. Purpose of question is to ensure equality among ALL of our participants)

_____ Heterosexual

_____ Lesbian

_____ Pansexual

_____ Gay

_____ Bisexual

Do not wish to answer Current Housing Situation:

_____ Literally Homeless

_____ Unstably Housed or at risk of losing housing

_____ Stably Housed

_____ Uncertain

Previous Living Situation: _____

I hereby affirm that the information indicated on this form is accurate and I am voluntarily providing it to RHFY with my permission to share this information with referral services, schools, State agencies and any other appropriate entity for help. RHFY shares information among staff members to provide full wrap around services to each youth.

Signature: _____ Date (mm/dd/yy): _____

Staff Name: _____ Date (mm/dd/yy): _____

Confidentiality Agreement For Host Families

This Host Home Program requires that strict confidentiality be maintained with respect to all information obtained by the program coordinator, staff and volunteers concerning the program, as well as the youth and young adults they serve. However, there are some exceptions to this rule such as if a young person is in danger of hurting themselves or someone else. The host family/young person shall not disclose any information obtained in the course of his/her position as a Host Home or participant or to any third parties without prior written consent from the program. This includes but is not limited to information pertaining to the Host Family, the young people, staff or other Host Home participants.

No information concerning any staff, the young person, the young person's family or Host Families will be divulged without prior written consent of the person involved. This includes addresses, telephone numbers, etc. Failure to comply with these confidentiality policies may result in disciplinary actions, including the removal of the young person and/or the expulsion of the program.

I understand the above and agree to uphold the confidentiality of these matters both during and following my service with the Host Home Program.

As a Host Home participant, I understand that I may have access to confidential information, both verbal and written, relating to young people, the Host Families and the program.

I understand, and agree, that all such information is to be treated confidentially and discussed only within the boundaries of my involvement in this program.

I also agree not to discuss these same matters after I have left my position in this program. I further understand that breach of this agreement shall constitute grounds for and may result in legal action.

Please sign below to indicate your acceptance and agreement with these terms outlined above.

Host Family Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Application to Host

Thank you for your interest in hosting a youth through our Host Family Program (HFP). Please review and complete the following application. Be sure that all adults over the age of 18 in the home initial the bottom of each page in the appropriate space and sign the last page.

Please return the completed, signed application and mail to:

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email. Thank you and we look forward to being a part of your hosting experience.

Family Information

Host—

Name: _____ Birthdate (MM/DD/YY): _____
(Last, First, Middle, Maiden)

Email Address: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Work Address: _____ Work Phone: _____

How Long Employed: _____ Driver's License #: _____

Host—

Name: _____ Birthdate (MM/DD/YY): _____
(Last, First, Middle, Maiden)

Email Address: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Work Address: _____ Work Phone: _____

How Long Employed: _____ Driver's License #: _____

I am / We are: (circle one) SINGLE MARRIED PARTNERS

Home Address: _____
(House number, street, city, state, zip)

Home Phone: _____

Initial here: _____

Family Members in the Home

Other Children (under age 18) at Home:

Name	Age/DOB	Biological / Adopted & When

Other Adults Living in the Home:

Name	Age/DOB	Relationship to Family

**All adults age 18 and over must have background clearances completed.

Do you own any firearms? (circle one) Yes No
If yes, how are they secured/stored? _____

Do you have a pool? (circle one) Yes No
If yes, how is it secured? _____

Other Information

Family Hobbies and Interests: _____

What are your reasons for hosting? _____

Initial here: _____

Host Preferences

We would like to host (number of youth): _____

Approximate ages preferred: _____

Gender Preference (circle one): Male Female Either

Special Requests (if any): _____

Other Hosting Experiences

Have you hosted in the past? (circle one): Yes No

If Yes, when: _____

With what program: _____

How many children did you host? _____

What was the outcome of that experience? _____

Information about that program you would like to share? _____

How did you hear about the Host Family Program? _____

Home Safety Check

You will be required to have a complete home safety check. Please contact the HFC to schedule an appointment.

Initial here: _____

Criminal Clearance

Have you ever been arrested for, charged or convicted of, any crimes (misdemeanor or felony), including, but not limited to: shoplifting, fraud, theft, DUI/DWI, domestic violence, child abuse, assault, aggravated assault, or possession of a controlled substance?

Host Name: _____

Circle one: Yes No

Host Name: _____

Circle one: Yes No

Please explain any "Yes" answers on a separate sheet of paper.

*Answering "YES" to the above question does not automatically disqualify you from participating in the hosting program, but providing false answers or deliberately withholding information could negatively affect your application.

Background Checks

Criminal clearance checks are required for each adult (age 18 and over) living in the home. Please see attached application forms.

Please list all states that you have lived in: _____

Our Social Security Numbers are:

Host Name: _____ SS#: _____

Host Name: _____ SS#: _____

Initial here: _____

Medical Self-Disclosure:

Host Name: _____

Have you been (within the last five years) or are you currently under treatment for any medical, psychiatric, addiction or emotional condition? (Circle one) Yes No

If "Yes", please explain condition(s), date diagnosed and reason for treatment: _____

Primary physician's name: _____ Phone: _____

Host Name: _____

Have you been (within the last five years) or are you currently under treatment for any medical, psychiatric, addiction or emotional condition? (Circle one) Yes No

If "Yes", please explain condition(s), date diagnosed and reason for treatment: _____

Primary physician's name: _____ Phone: _____

WHILE THIS INFORMATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY PREVENT US FROM HOSTING, WE UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO PROVIDE COMPLETE AND HONEST INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION FROM CONSIDERATION.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Initial here: _____

Key Points

- I/we understand that I/we will be allowed to host a young person only after submitting an approved home safety check as well as criminal clearance checks.
- I/we agree to pay for the costs to provide room and board.
- I/we understand that the youth's stay is not guaranteed and may be cancelled for various reasons.
- I/we understand that the program cannot refund funds to a Host Family after the funds have been committed or spent.
- During my/our involvement with this program, I/we agree to engage in a conduct that is appropriately respectful of others and to abide by any incidental instructions that may be given by the program coordinators.
- I/we understand that under no circumstances is hitting or using force towards a young person acceptable and that this Host Home program will remove the young person from my/our home if abuse is suspected.
- I/we agree to comply with the weekly check-in schedule set forth.
- I/we understand the importance of preparing for hosting a youth. Therefore, I/we agree to participate in the training provided.
- I/we understand and agree that the Program Leadership/Board of Directors has the right to reject any application with no explanation.
- I/we understand that this Host Home program is not an adoption agency nor is it affiliated with one. The minor youth participating in the program are not part of an adoption process.
- I/we agree to be sensitive to alcohol consumption by others in the presence of the young person in my/our care.

Signature: _____

Print Name and Date: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name and Date: _____

Application Checklist

To complete the application packet, please include the following:

- Photocopy of drivers license**

- Photocopy of proof of auto insurance**

- Photocopy of proof of homeowners insurance**

- Family Photo**

- Background check forms**

- Host Family Contract**

- Three Personal References**

Sample Interview Questions and Conversation Topics

1. What led you to inquire about Host Homes?
2. Tell me a bit about you and your family.
3. What is your past experience with young people?
4. How long were you thinking of being a Host Family?
Emergency? Short-term? Long-term?
5. What age and gender of young people are you thinking of inviting to your home?
6. Would you be accepting of an LGBTQ young person? A different race?
7. Do you and/or your family have a specific faith? If so would you require the young person to attend worship services?
8. Would you be open to having a young person who smokes?
9. Would you be willing to take in a young person recovering from drugs or alcohol? Someone returning from a mental health facility?
10. Are you and your spouse/partner willing to take the required 12+ hours of training?

These are just a few questions to get started with. Please add more that are specific to your program. An in-depth interview should take about 2 hours to get a feeling of what type of Host Home Family they will be.

Home Address: _____

Inspected by: _____ Date: _____

Home Safety Checklist

GENERAL

- Telephone is available in case of emergency
- Well water clearance must be obtained if water is from a private source.
- House appears reasonably neat and clutter free.
- Windows have curtains or shades to provide privacy.
- Windows are intact and open windows can be closed without difficulty.
- Floorings are clean and in good repair.
- Electrical switches and receptacles are in good working order.
- Type of heating, _____, is in good working order, well vented, and able to be turned off.
- Heating capable of heating entire house to comfort. If not, what are alternative modes of heating?

- Air Conditioning system is operable and in good working order.
- Hot water source is large enough for household needs and area around it is clean.
- Hot water is between 105 and 120 degrees at the faucets.
- Smoke detectors are working, properly placed, and batteries are checked regularly (every 3 months). A working smoke detector must be present in or outside the youth's bedroom.
- Hallways and bedrooms have clear passages, and all rooms including hallways, passages, and outside doorways and walkways have adequate lighting.
- Furniture is in good condition.
- All doors, doorways and screen doors are in good repair, and can be locked from the inside.
- Flashlights are readily available in case of power failure and batteries are checked regularly (every 3 months).
- If firearms or other weapons are owned and stored in the house, they are stored unloaded in a locked cabinet and ammunition is stored and locked in a separate location.
- Fire extinguishers are readily available and fully charged, especially in the kitchen.

KITCHEN

- Refrigerator and freezer are in good condition and maintain appropriate temperatures to prevent food spoilage.
- Alcohol (beer, wine liquors) are stored away from students (preferred a locked cabinet).
- Counter, sinks and work areas are clean, sanitary and in good condition.
- Stove/oven operate properly.
- Dishwasher (if present) is working properly at appropriate water temperature assuring sanitation.
- Adequate space to store food.
- Cooking and eating utensils are in good condition. Adequate place settings and seating in dining area for all household members to eat together.
- Sufficient kitchen area for food storage and preparation according to the family's size.

BATHROOM

- All prescription medicines are in a locked box or inaccessible to youth.
- First Aid kit is stored in a conveniently reachable place or supplies are in a medicine cabinet. First Aid kit must contain tweezers, scissors, tape, band aids, gauze, antiseptic wipes, antiseptic ointment, thermometer (non mercury), cold pack, burn care packets, first aid non stick pads, elastic bandages/ace bandages, health care gloves, first aid guide.
- Bathroom facilities are working properly, are clean and sanitary.
- Adequate number of towels and linens are available for all household members.

GARAGE / OUTSIDE AREAS

- There is an adequate number of trash containers.
- Garage is safe. If used for storage, items are stored in a safe manner.
- If washer and dryer are on the premises, they work properly and the area is free from clutter. If no laundry facilities are on the premises, the plan for laundry is:
- All chemical cleaners, disinfectants, insecticides, and other poisonous substances are stored away from food storage areas.
- Power tools and equipment are stored safely and/or locked away in garage

- Vehicle(s) are operational with lights, horn and signals working.
- Vehicle is able to transport all family members with seats and working seat belts for each passenger.

BEDROOMS

- There are no more than two youth per bedroom.
- Youth has own room or is sharing a room with a youth of the same gender and not with an adult.
- No room commonly used for other purposes can be used as a bedroom and a bedroom cannot be a passageway to another room.
- Mattress & pillows are in good condition.

GROUNDS

- If there is a swimming pool / spa at the home, condo, apartment complex or sub-division, Toxic pool maintenance products are kept in locked storage. Life preservers are readily accessible and the area is kept free of glass, sharp objects and debris.
- Fence, if applicable, is in good condition.
- Yard is free of debris, spare auto parts, appliances, scrap, etc. Non-operational vehicles are kept locked, repaired promptly or towed off premises.

Signatures:

Host parent(s): _____ Date: _____

Program Staff: _____ Date: _____

Correction plan:

Discipline policy

All of the young people in the Host Home program will struggle with their new living situation—a situation that comes with nerves, expectations, and desires on both sides. Sometimes these situations should be overlooked, some discussed, and some disciplined. This policy was created to help the Host Family, the young person, and the Host Home program define who is in charge of the situation and how to move forward to create a better living environment for all concerned.

Occurrences such as staying in their room, not coming to meals, being quiet, etc., should be overlooked for a short time in the beginning. This occurs quite regularly as young people are usually overwhelmed and trying to adjust not only to new people but also new surroundings (sometimes much nicer than they have ever been in before). If this occurs for more than 3 days please contact the Host Home program office and an action plan will be created such as seeing if it is still a good match, if the environment is too stressful, and then how do we all make the young person more comfortable and in turn help the Host Family feel more comfortable.

Occurrences such as consistently not doing chores, talking back, not doing homework, etc., should first prompt a call to the Host Home program office and then an action plan developed and written down. Some things that could be included in an action plan include home visit by a caseworker, finding out if there is more to the situation than it seems, is the young person acting out because of outside tensions, school, etc. All parties, including the young person, will agree upon appropriate discipline actions. (Be it understood, that these and more issues usually occur during the 6th through 9th month of living with a Host Family. Young people often test Host Families to make sure that if they do wrong they will still be cared for.)

Occurrences such as skipping school, using drugs or alcohol, not coming home, bringing in friends not approved, etc., should first prompt a call to the Host Home program office and an emergency home visit would be scheduled. The plan of action is as follows:

- First offense – Find out the bigger story and decide on a form of discipline agreed upon by Host Family and Host Home Program Director.
- Second offense – If the same issue as already been addressed and discipline already occurred for this offense and a similar situation arises then the young person will be given a stronger agreed upon discipline (more days of restriction, house arrest, etc.) and a warning of losing their housing.
- Third offense – If there is a third situation in the same vein as prior, the young person will be removed from the Host Home and potentially dismissed from the Host Home program. Young people who fall into this category will meet with the Host Home program staff to determine the likelihood of success with another Host Family and if found not, and then will be dismissed from the Host Home Program all together. Young people can continue to receive support through counseling, mediation, and outreach services.

Signatures:

Youth / Young Adult: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Program Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Parent Responsibility and Childcare Authorization Form for Minors

I, the undersigned parent, _____, hereby grant [the Host Home program] and it's assigned Host Family the authority to take temporary care of my child, _____. This grant of temporary authority shall begin on _____ and shall remain effective until terminated by the undersigned.

The above named caretaker(s) shall have the power to:

- seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the child as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to, medical doctor and/or hospital visits
- authorize medical treatment or medical procedures with notification to parent
- make appropriate decisions regarding clothing, bodily nourishment, school and shelter
- explain and sign for absences from school
- pick up children from school
- sign release forms for school related activities
- have access to school records and be present at IEP meetings if applicable
- sign general release forms for driver's education, driver's licenses, passports, etc.

I understand that as the Biological parent / legal guardian that I am not giving up my parental rights or responsibilities and there will times that I will be required to be in attendance of situations concerning the health of my child such as medical appointments, etc. and if I am not in attendance when required, I may have to answer to CPS or other state authorities.

Dated: _____ State of Washington, County of _____

On this day, _____ appeared before me, signed this form, and swore (or affirmed) that he/she understood its contents and that its contents are truthful.

Signature: _____ Printed Name _____

Title: _____ My appointment expires: _____

Young Person Contract

As a Hosted Youth, I agree:

- _____ to stay with my Host Family for pre-designated point in time from _____ to _____
- _____ to give my Host parents at least two weeks notice of my intention to move out of the Host Home
- _____ to release the Host Home program and Host Family from any liability for any loss, damage, accident or injury while staying in the home
- _____ to respect the rules, routines, and beliefs of my Host Family
- _____ to help with basic chores around the home
- _____ to keep my living area clean
- _____ to be careful with all items in the home
- _____ to ask before bringing friends or family members to the home
- _____ to attend the Host Family youth orientation given by the Host Family Coordinator
- _____ to attend the Host Family youth support group when available

(Please initial each line to show you have read and understand each request.)

The Host Home program reserves the right to remove a young person from a home without notice in the event of inappropriate behavior by a Host Family member or young person.

Signatures:

Youth / Young Adult: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Host Home Program Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Host Family Contract

As a Host Family, I agree:

- _____ to provide a welcoming, stable, and secure living environment for the young person
- _____ to treat the young person as a family member and invite the young person to join in family activities/outings
- _____ to respect the rights, privacy, and culture of the young person, including religious and political beliefs
- _____ to provide the young person with a private room equipped with a comfortable bed (with linens, pillow, blankets or comforter), dresser or desk, chair, lamp, closet, and window
- _____ to provide Internet access
- _____ to provide evening and weekend meals, with one cooked meal at least five times a week, respecting the young person's dietary needs
- _____ to explain house rules and expectations to the young person (see Discussion Form)
- _____ to allow the young person access to the washroom, laundry facilities, and cleaning equipment
- _____ to allow the young person use of the household, including telephone, TV, DVD player, etc.
- _____ to familiarize the young person with the Host Family's neighborhood
- _____ to provide adequate instruction in the use of the public transit system and bus routes to school
- _____ to provide the young person with a key to the house by _____
- _____ to notify the Host Family Coordinator (HFC) promptly if any difficulties arise in dealing with the young person, and to cooperate fully in resolving any such difficulties
- _____ to attend the Host Family orientation given by the HFC, if it is the first time hosting
- _____ to notify the HFC of any changes in family status or contact information
- _____ to notify the HFC of any family vacations without the young person that exceed one week
- _____ to inform the HFC of any other young people living in the home
- _____ to ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the home are in working order
- _____ to release the Host Home program from expenses related to long-distance phone calls made by the young person or to damage caused by the young person
- _____ to release the Host Home program from any liability for any loss, damage, accident or injury while a young person is staying in the home
- _____ to accept responsibility for maintaining adequate insurance coverage on both home and vehicle
- _____ to permit the HFC to conduct home inspections and review accommodations for the young person
- _____ have been given and read and understand the Host Home program discipline policy

(Please initial above to show you have read and understood each item.)

The organization reserves the right to remove a student from a home without notice in the event of inappropriate behavior by a host family member or youth.

Signatures:

Youth / Young Adult: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Host Home Program Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

House Rules and Expectations Discussion Form

1. Use of Phone _____
2. Meal Time _____
3. Bed Time _____
4. Chores _____
5. Laundry _____
6. Weekends _____
7. Church? _____
8. School _____
9. Job _____
10. Transportation _____
11. Curfew _____
12. Internet Use _____
13. Computer _____
14. Friends _____
15. Shower _____
16. Smoking? _____
17. Significant Other? _____
18. Family Visits _____
19. Snacks _____
20. Cooking _____
21. TV Time _____
22. Bedroom _____
23. Car? _____

24. Cell Phone? _____

25. Borrowing Items _____

26. Family _____

27. Music Volume _____

28. Fridge Space _____

29. Storage _____

30. Other Things? _____

Host Family Quarterly Report for Parents of Minors

Youth's Name: _____ Date: _____

Please return this report (via email, USPS or in person) to the case-manager who will then give send to the parent(s) via email, USPS or in person.

1. Youth's strengths, hobbies, gifts, participation in extracurricular activities:

2. Youth's social interaction with host family's family, peers and siblings:

3. Youth's physical health (state results of medical and dental appointments):

4. Youth's behavior and emotional health (include counselor or therapist appointment schedule):

5. Please describe how the youth has adjusted to your family's expectations and rules:

6. What are your views on what the youth in your care needs at this time?

7. What are your thoughts about how these needs can best be met?

8. Is there any other information that you would like to share with the his/her parent(s) at this time?

Travel Authorization for Minors

I, the undersigned, _____, parent of _____, hereby grant _____, the authority to take my child, _____ on a trip to _____ from _____.

The above named caretaker(s) shall have the power to:

- Travel by airplane to _____
- Seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the child as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to, medical doctor and/or hospital visits
- Authorize medical treatment or medical procedures in an emergency situation
- Make appropriate decisions regarding clothing, bodily nourishment, and shelter

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dissolution of Host Family Partnership

The Host Home program has the right to dissolve any Host Family partnership at any time when it seems like an unfit situation for any party concerned. The Host Home program has the right to refuse the services of any Host Family that they feel are no longer a good fit for the program or organization.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Un-authorization Form for Minors

I, the undersigned parent, _____ hereby release _____
from temporary care of my child, _____. This release of temporary care shall
begin on _____.

The above named caretaker(s) shall no longer have the power to:

- seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the child as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to, medical doctor and/or hospital visits
- authorize medical treatment or medical procedures with notification to parent
- make appropriate decisions regarding clothing, bodily nourishment, school and shelter
- explain and sign for absences from school
- pick up children from school
- sign release forms for school related activities
- have access to school records and IEP meetings
- sign general release forms for driver's education, driver's licenses, etc.

Dated: _____ State of Washington, County of _____

On this day, _____, _____ appeared before me, signed this form, and swore (or affirmed) that he/she understood its contents and that its contents are truthful.

Signature: _____ Printed Name _____

Title: _____ My appointment expires: _____

Mandated Reporter Acknowledgment

“Mandatory reporters” are persons or groups of persons who have frequent contact with children and families and are required by Washington’s State law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to CPS or to the appropriate law enforcement agency (RCW 26.44.030). It is the intent of the law that these designated persons, who are in positions to identify children who are at risk from abuse and neglect, will report suspected child abuse and neglect so that the need for protective services can be assessed.

Mandatory reporter training can be completed by watching the online video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zss1oh7b57A> Once you have completed the video and understand your responsibilities please complete this form. If you would like this link emailed to you, or you are having problems viewing the video, please contact us at the office. I acknowledge that I have seen and understand the video on Mandated Reporting. I understand that as a Host Family / Volunteer, I am a Mandated Reporter to the state of Washington.

Host Parent Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Young people 12-17

The Host Home model is best suited for young people who are age 12-17 and seem to be the most successful placements. These young people are still attending school, with a few exceptions, and tend not to have been out of a home environment for as long as the young adult population. They find it easier to assimilate into family living with curfews, house chores, checking in when they will be late, etc.

This underage population is much easier to vet because they are generally in contact with school faculty, school counselors, and homeless liaisons. This comes in handy when looking for the best matching Host Home family. The more information had on both parties the best results will occur with the match.

Expectations for Youth Ages 18-24

The first Host Home programs in Washington State were created for youth under the age of 18 with a focus on youth successfully completing school. Youth desiring to go to college seem to be the most successful placements for young adults ages 18-24. This is not to mean that young person over the age of 18 who are not interested in college cannot be effective in a Host Home situation. With that being said, there are different expectations for young people who have graduated High School and are not desiring more schooling or have no desire to finish but just want to focus on obtaining employment and housing.

Host Families do have expectations when any young person comes into their home. There will be chores and expectations that they are being productive; looking for work and/or permanent housing, working on a GED, etc.

Young people who are older generally are required to provide their own transportation; some families will encourage and even help young person get a license and/or vehicle to help with this. Make sure that young people are near a bus line if this is the Host Family's expectation.

The most successful Host Homes are the ones where everyone is working hard to support the young person in working towards their goals no matter the age.

Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care

In Washington State a Host Home program is not allowed to serve underage youth in the State's Foster Care system. Young adults in extended foster care have worked with Host Home programs along with their Social Worker to house a young adult and young people exiting Foster Care also have been housed in Host Home programs.

Staffing

The foundation of any successful Host Home program is intentional hiring and recruiting that meets the needs of the youth and young adults and strengthens the organization it supports.

Successful matching is dependent on hiring staff and recruiting volunteers, training them well to be trauma informed and compassionate. It is important that the staff in charge of the matches knows both the family and the youth/young adult and can understand their needs as well as support and encourage both sides. This also applies to the case management; the same case manager needs to serve both the youth and the family for best results. The case manager then has the whole picture, not just the person's they are serving.

Caseloads should be around 6-8 youth depending on the time needed for each Host Home pairing. Some pairings are more detailed than others based on the young person's needs, for example a young person may need many doctor and counseling appointments along with school supports, while another youth might need none of these.

The case manager should always be focused on advocating for the youth first. Youth need to know that they have strong support in their corner. It is important to make it clear to the young person and the Host Home upfront that the youth are their top priority in all things.

When hiring staff, recruiting those with vocational and lived experience in housing, homelessness, education, advocacy, social justice, and diversity may result in better understanding and compassion for the unaccompanied youth and young adults they serve.

The structure of the Board of Directors is crucial in any organization. In a small organization the services provided can be greatly impacted by the design of the board. Recruitment for the Board of Directors should focus around youth and young adults making sure that there is youth representation at all meetings. The Board of Directors should also be comprised of professionals with experience in education, philanthropy, housing, child advocacy, social work, finance, social justice and those with community connections. Board members must be willing to address biases so that they can fully advocate for, support and represent the youth and young adults in which they serve.

Trainings for ALL staff, volunteers and Board of Directors are crucial for the organization to have a unified voice and mission. It is best practice to train in Positive Youth Development, Trauma Informed Care, Youth Mental Health First Aid, as well as trainings in De-escalation Adulthood, Culturally Competent Care, Diversity, and Equity.

Recruitment

Recruitment of Host Homes tends to be easier in smaller towns, where people know everyone and want to help their neighbor. Churches tend to be very supportive of Host Home programs and quite a few volunteers to host have come from people of faith. Please be mindful that some congregations and individuals who attend certain denominations can be very set in their ideas and it is necessary to understand their beliefs and ideas fully before allowing the potential Host Family meet the young person. The reason this is very important is because young people may have different beliefs than the family they may be moving in with and both sides need to be respectful of that and willing to live together despite their differences. If the Host Home program finds that a certain potential Host Family is set in their beliefs then it is only appropriate to house a young person who aligns with those beliefs. This allows for success and support for all parties.

When recruiting Host Homes for specific populations such as tribal youth, LGBTQ, youth of color, etc., it is best to find Host Home families within those communities to best serve the youth within their shared identity and culture, this helps provide a sense of belonging and connection to their community resulting in better outcomes, longer stays and lifelong relationships and supports for the future.

Kinship

It is always wonderful when a young person has already identified a relative or friend that they would like to live with. It is even better when that supportive person is willing to take in a young person.

Many times these “kinship” relationships are in need of support to be successful. Many people are concerned about the liability they hold when they take in a loved one or friend. Host Home programs can be the agent that supports their decision to take in a young person. If the youth is a minor and has already been living with the individual or family and does not have the proper paperwork then the Host Home program can help in contacting the parents/legal guardians. Sometimes “kinship” families need support with clothing and toiletries for the young person, help with costs such as food. The Host Home program can provide these through donations of items, helping young people obtain food SNAP cards, and/or through stipends for the young person.

Sometimes there will be a youth, who is minor, who is living with a family member who does not have legal authority to sign them into a Host Home. The state requires to have written permission from the legal guardian—the best way to achieve this is to fax or email the parents and have them sign the form. Per RCW 74.15.020(2)(o), a parent or legal guardian must give authorization for a minor to reside in a Host Home the law you cannot have a minor in a host home if there is no legal guardian to sign. The best way to approach this would be to contact DCYF and apply for a CHINS petition and a judge can assign in cases where there are no guardians.

Occasionally youth choose to live with adults who may not be the most healthy for them so in this instance they may not qualify to be in the Host Home program your organization is running but please make sure that your agency is still checking in with and supporting this youth in other ways. Just being a solid and caring adult in their lives can make a big difference.

Subsidized Housing / Renters

Occasionally, a Host Home may be under a subsidized housing contract with the state or local Housing Authority. In these instances the Host Home program and/or the Host Family will need to contact the correct authorities to add the young person’s name to the lease for them to legally reside there. The last thing you want to do is set a young person up for additional trauma being removed from another home. When it comes to those Host Families who are renting, a letter from the landlord to the organization stating they approve of a young person living with the renters.

Stipends / Financial Support

Some Host Home programs are able to afford stipends for Host Home youth and young adults some run their host home programs entirely through volunteering. If running your Host Home program entirely volunteer it is best to offer the young person free clothing, school supplies, phone and phone minutes, etc. so that the Host home family is not needing to furnish these items.

Washington State does not allow any money gained through town, city, state, or federal avenues to be given to a Host Home Family. Stipends are given to young people, but if funding was achieved through these avenues young people are given the suggestion that they give a portion toward household expenses. (Note: Host Home RCW 24.03.550 Any host home program that receives local, state, or government funding shall report the following information to the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs annually by December 1st of each year: The number of children the program served, why the child was placed with a host home, and where the child went after leaving the host home, including but not limited to returning to the parents, running away, reaching the age of majority, or becoming a dependent of the state. A host home program shall not receive more than one hundred thousand dollars per year of public funding, including local, state, and federal funding. A host home shall not receive any local, state, or government funding.

A majority of Host Home Programs look to fund stipends through private funders, allowing the program to offer stipends, as they deem necessary.

Just know that you can run a successful program without having stipends available, this will not deter the ability to house young people in your community.

Family Engagement and Reconciliation

Some young people would be able to reside in their current living situation with family mediation, family contracts for successful living, and weekly meetings. Providing a biological or kinship family support through counseling, family meetings and/or respite care in a temporary Host Home can make a huge difference in repairing a broken situation or walking through a family crisis.

Occasionally, a situation may arise when a young person would need help with a CHINS (Child in Need of Services) petition. A CHINS petition is a request that goes through the courts obtaining a court order mandating temporary placement (for up to six months) of a minor in a residence other than the home of his/her parent. The need for the placement must be based on a serious conflict between the parent and minor that cannot be resolved by delivery of services to the family while the minor remains at home. A minor, parent, or DCYF (Department of Children, Youth and Families) may file a CHINS petition. (A "parent" is defined as the person(s) having legal right to custody of the minor and includes custodian or guardian.)

Once a CHINS petition has been filed, the child may be temporarily placed, if not already placed, by DCYF in a crisis residential center, foster family home, licensed group home facility, or any other suitable residence to be determined by the Court and DCYF, including a Host Home. In some local court systems there may need to be an agreement of reconciliation for both parties for a CHINS to be successful.

Emancipation is difficult in Washington State, a young person needs to have housing and employment and be attending school, getting their GED or have graduated. Some courts do not consider a Host Home permanent housing for emancipation, so helping a young person find permanent and stable housing is a must to be successful in the emancipation process.

Confidentiality

Training in confidentiality is very important and every participant needs to adhere to the confidentiality agreement above. The youth are given information about the family and likewise the family will be given information concerning the potential youth in their care. The more information given prior to the match, the better the match will be. Private information such as current substance use, current mental and physical health challenges, criminal history pertaining to safety, must be shared for the full disclosure to a Host Family to make an informed decision. Past housing history, personal information, phone numbers, etc. will not be shared unless approved by the person themselves.

Grievance Process

Host Homes are not always easy and many times there can be misunderstandings and sometimes issues where a separation is needed, due to different living standards, morals, values, etc. No young person is required to stay in a host home and can leave at any time. Likewise, a biological parent or Host Home can conclude the match at any time.

If the young person is upset about something that was said or done within their Host Home they need to contact their case manager immediately and will work with the young person to decide on the next steps. If a Host Home has a concern pertaining to the young person they should call the case manager to create a plan to address the concern.

It is always best in the situation of a concern that it be addressed immediately utilizing the case manager as a mediator. If the situation cannot be worked out another Host Home may be an option, depending on the concern.

In the case of a grievance concerning a case manager from the young person or Host Family there should be organizational/program plan for how that information goes directly to the Case manager's employer (Executive Director, Board President, etc.) and bypasses the Case manager themselves. Giving the Host Family and young person the contact number and/or email for the next in the chain of command at the beginning of the process eliminates the feeling of only having one person in control of the situation at hand.

Training

Training for both the Host Family and the Host Home program staff is the most important and most valuable part of the whole program's success. With the exception of the Host Family support training, all adults involved with the placement—staff and Host Family alike—need to attend the following trainings:

- Positive Youth Development
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (8 hour class)
- Trauma Informed Care (3 hour class)
- De-escalation
- Adultism
- Diversity and Equity
- Culturally Competent Care
- Specific special needs training (if placing a youth with special needs in the home)
- For those housing minors – Mandatory Reporter Training

Host Home RCW 24.03.550

A host home program, and host home, operated by a tax exempt organization for youth not in the care of or receiving services from the department, if that program: (i) Recruits and screens potential homes in the program, including performing background checks on individuals over the age of eighteen residing in the home through the Washington state patrol or equivalent law enforcement agency and performing physical inspections of the home; (ii) screens and provides case management services to youth in the program; (iii) obtains a notarized permission slip or limited power of attorney from the parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to participate in the program and the authorization is updated every six months when a youth remains in a host home longer than six months; (iv) obtains insurance for the program through an insurance provider authorized under Title 48 RCW; (v) provides mandatory reporter and confidentiality training; and (vi) registers with the secretary of state as provided in section 3 of this act.

A host home is a private home that volunteers to host youth in need of temporary placement that is associated with a host home program. Any host home program that receives local, state, or government funding shall report the following information to the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs annually by December 1st of each year: The number of children the program served, why the child was placed with a host home, and where the child went after leaving the host home, including but not limited to returning to the parents, running away, reaching the age of majority, or becoming a dependent of the state. A host home program shall not receive more than one hundred thousand dollars per year of public funding, including local, state, and federal funding. A host home shall not receive any local, state, or government funding.



Office of the Secretary of State
 Corporations & Charities Division
 (360) 725 - 0377 | www.sos.wa.gov/corps
 801 Capitol Way S, Olympia, WA 98504-0234

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- Amendment Fee \$20
- Amendment Fee with Expedited Service \$70

HOST HOME REGISTRATION

[RCW 24.03](#)

Please provide UBI # _____

NAME OF NONPROFIT CORPORATION: (as currently recorded with the Office of the Secretary of State)

STATEMENT

I state that this Host Home Program meets all statutory requirements as provided in RCW 74.15.020

SIGNATURE AND NOTARIZATION

These representations are true and correct, and contain no material omissions of fact to the best of my knowledge and belief.

 (Printed Name)

 (Signature)

State of Washington County of: _____

Signed and affirmed before me on: _____

By (print name) _____

 Notary Public Signature

My Commission Expires: _____

INSTRUCTIONS – HOST HOME REGISTRATION

Please complete all sections of the Host Home Registration.

USE DARK INK ONLY. For an electronic, fillable version of this form, please visit our website at www.sos.wa.gov/corps.

FEES: Host Home Registration is \$20.00 in addition to any other fees.

If expedited service is requested then include an additional \$50.00 and write “EXPEDITE” on the outside of the envelope. Make the checks or money orders payable to “Secretary of State”.

(ALL fees are non-refundable and all documents are public record)

UBI NUMBER:

Please enter your existing Unified Business Identifier (UBI Number) if applicable.

NAME:

Enter the name of the corporation as currently recorded with the Office of the Secretary of State. If this registration is attached to **NEW** Nonprofit Articles of Incorporation make sure the name matches exactly as what is being requested in the Articles.

STATEMENT:

In this section you are stating that you have met the statutory requirements of a Host Home Program as provided in RCW 74.15.020.

SIGNATURE AND NOTARIZATION:

This is a required part of the Host Home Registration. Sign and print your name in the presence of a notary public and include the appropriate seal from the notary public.

Mail completed forms and payment to:

In Person:
Secretary of State
Corporations Division
801 Capitol Way S
Olympia, WA 98501-1226

By Mail:
Secretary of State
Corporations Division
PO BOX 40234
Olympia, WA 98504-0234

If you have questions, need assistance, or would like to provide feedback please visit the Corporations Division website at www.sos.wa.gov/corps, call 360-725-0377 or email corps@sos.wa.gov.