

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK OF ESSEX COUNTY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	How IHN Works.....	1
2.	Hosting Shelter Hours.....	2
3.	1 st Day Guest Orientation.....	3
4.	Host Coordinator Responsibilities Check List.....	4
5.	Volunteer Job Descriptions.....	5
6.	Interacting with Guests.....	6-7
7.	IHN Hospitality Code.....	8
8.	Frequently Asked Questions.....	9-11
9.	Medical Questions/Emergency.....	12
10.	Emergency Phone Numbers.....	13
11.	IHN Health Safety.....	14
12.	Guest Guidelines.....	15-16
13.	Volunteer Debriefing Form.....	17-18

HOW IHN WORKS

The Interfaith Hospitality Network unites religious congregations, as well as independent community volunteers, to assist homeless families. The congregations temporarily house guest families in their churches and synagogues. Each congregation provides accommodations and meals for three to four families (up to 14 people) for two to four weeks a year on a rotating schedule.

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Even your small acts of kindness go a long way to improve our guests' lives. Thank you for understanding your role and supporting our homeless families.
- Our national homeless problem gains another advocate through you. Thank you for seeing beyond stereotypes and treating our families with respect and dignity.
- Discover the way in which relationships based on mutual respect and understanding transform the lives of an IHN guest and volunteer alike.
- With your children alongside as you volunteer, you are helping to create generational change for a better world.



HOSTING SHELTER HOURS

All hosting weeks begin and end on a Sunday. Our van driver will take the clients to the congregation in the evening and back to IHN in the morning.

Sunday Schedule

Arrive on the first Sunday – 2:00 pm
Depart on the last Sunday – 1:00 pm

Weekday Schedule

Morning pick up of guests 7:00 am – **All guests with vehicles must exit same time**
Evening arrival of guests 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Morning wakeup for breakfast and daily prep: 6:00 am
Evening dinner: 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Free relaxation and social time: 7:30 - 9:00 pm
Evening prep for bed: 9:00 - 10:00 pm
Lights out: 10:00 pm, except for weekend, Friday and Saturday night

Saturday Schedule

This is the guests' free day and some will leave for the day or night. Overnight leave must be approved by Case Manager. Host Coordinator will be notified in advance.

Curfew

Curfew for all guests Sunday through Thursday is 9:00 pm. Friday and Saturday curfew is 10:00 pm. Guests can exit the hospitality room after dinner but they must return by curfew and inform the hosts that they are leaving the hospitality room.

Weather Exceptions

If we have a large accumulation of snow, a blizzard or a state of emergency, IHN offices will be closed and clients will need to stay at the congregational shelter.

Holidays

Please note, if you are hosting during a holiday, IHN will not be open to the clients for the day, and will have to remain at the congregational facility.

1ST DAY GUEST ORIENTATION

On the first Sunday guests need to be given an orientation tour of your building and guidelines for staying at your premises. Guests will have had lunch at the previous congregation, but providing a light snack would be welcome depending on when Sunday dinner is served at your congregation.

1. Walk guests through the spaces: guest rooms, kitchen, and recreation area.
2. Instruct guests regarding spaces that may be off limits.
3. Discuss neatness expectations of living spaces, bathrooms and kitchen.
4. Let guests know if they are allowed in the kitchen.
5. Notify guests and Case Manager of any planned activities during the week.
6. Parents are responsible to be with their children at all times. It is a “rule.”
7. Let the clients know procedures and time for doing laundry.
8. Ask guests about their Saturday schedules to see who will be present.
9. Sunday morning: clients strip and fold beds, and organize for move to next congregation.
10. Show the guests any designated smoking area.

Please Note: If there is a need for child seats, i.e. if laundry will be done off premises, or you are planning an outing off premises, please make sure parents bring the child seats with them from the van.

HOST COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES CHECK LIST

RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- **Set up and take down:** volunteer teams set up the accommodations before guests arrive and take down at the end of the hosting period.
- **Buy supplies:** use funds from the congregational budget or coordinate donations to buy food staples, paper products, cleaning supplies, toiletries, and other needed items.
- **Laundry:** one or two volunteers wash the guests' and overnight hosts' towels and sheets when the week is over.
- **After-Dinner cleanup:** volunteers clear tables, wash dishes, etc.
- **Plan Activities:** volunteers organize special activities and events such as arts and crafts projects, movie parties, and outings for children and families.
- **Laundry:** if a washer and dryer is not available at the congregation, a volunteer drives guests to a laundry facility and provides cleaning detergent and quarters for washing and drying guests' clothes. Laundry is done off premises once a week. **Please note:** if guests are bringing their children with them to the laundry facility, they must have a child car seat.
- **Breakfast cleanup:** overnight volunteers should clean up after breakfast.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

- **Greeters** (two volunteers in advance of the van arriving): Guests are met by volunteer greeters whose sole job is to offer hospitality, a listening ear and friendly warm greeting to the guests. The van often drops off the guests between 5:30pm and 6:30pm. Volunteer greeters should arrive and help them get oriented to the evening routine. A greeter is especially helpful so that guests feel comfortable, safe and secure.
- **Dinner Preparation** (two or three volunteers, in advance of 6:00 pm): A hot meal is served between 6:00 and 7:00 pm. Cooking dinner is a good opportunity for congregational groups, such as women's circles, men's groups, to get involved with the IHN program.
- **Evening hospitality** (a minimum of two volunteers 6:00-8:30 or 9:00 pm): the volunteers may be part of the dinner preparation team or may arrive to eat with guests. Dinner hosts socialize with guests, welcome newcomers and assist parents with children's needs. Dinner is informal.
- **Overnight** (two volunteers, 8:30 pm -9:00 pm to 7:00 am): Overnight volunteers spend time with guests, help children with homework if needed, and are available in case of emergency. They wake guests by 6:00 am. Guests may leave as early as 6:00-6:30 am in the morning to go to work. Overnight volunteers often set out breakfast foods and clean up after breakfast. In some congregations, two new volunteers come in to prepare breakfast and clean up. Check with your Host Coordinator to be clear on breakfast expectations.
- **Breakfast Preparation** (one or two volunteers, 6:00-7:00 am): On weekdays, breakfast is a simple meal with quick foods like cold cereal, muffins, toast, juice, and coffee. On weekends breakfast is often more relaxed and hosts prepare something more substantial. Please don't serve any pork products. Saturday breakfast preparation is a great opportunity for youth groups such as Scouts to participate.

INTERACTING WITH GUESTS

As a volunteer, you support homeless families through acts of kindness which are truly meaningful in the lives of these families in crisis. How you approach this generous effort is of key importance to both you and our families.

Identifying with your guests

For most of us, it's impossible to understand what homelessness feels like. Each person deals with the devastation and trauma of this life-altering crisis in a different way.

Consider this:

As with any tragic situation, you will meet some people who are optimistic and open about being displaced. Others may feel ashamed or withdrawn. If you encounter anger or frustration, remember these feelings have nothing to do with you personally. As volunteers, it is critical that we respect and honor our guests at all times, no matter where they are on this emotional journey.

Learning not to judge

Guests and volunteers may have different lifestyles and values. The task is to accept these differences and relate to guests as individuals worthy of trust, respect, and courtesy. An ability to see life from another perspective is an especially useful attitude for all volunteers.

Learning to listen

As a volunteer, it is important for you to employ the best listening skills you can. By being "active listeners" you can be most helpful to guests. This involves listening to what guests say by your reflections, your summarization and accepting what you hear. It requires you to use your ears, eyes, heart, mind and body in your interactions with your guests. Some key points involve:

Reflect back (repeat out loud) what you hear.

Clarify things you do not understand.

Do not assume others see things the way you do or think the way you do.

Do not express your opinions readily unless you are asked for them.

Accept others' opinions without judging them.

INTERACTING WITH GUESTS CONT.

Respecting privacy of guests

Guests will meet dozens of volunteers during their stay in your congregation. For this reason especially, you need to take your cues from guests. Introduce yourself and be friendly, but do not pry or hover. Guests who want to talk are not usually shy about it and respect those who do not want to talk. It is important to remember that there is a **confidentiality** issue involved in working with guests. **Do not discuss the guests' personal information.**

If there is any concern regarding the guest, please let the Host Coordinator know and he or she will in turn speak with the Case Manager. (973-641-5019)

Understanding our own personal limits

At times you may feel helpless in the face of seemingly insurmountable problems in guests' lives. To temper any disappointment, it is vital that you remain clear about your role. You are not a counselor or a professional problem solver. At most, you only encounter guests only a few times a week every two or three months.

Focusing on strengths instead of weaknesses

As a volunteer you are likely to develop relationships with guests and become a helping force by focusing on their strengths and capabilities. This focus helps to create a state of mind in which an individual feels personal power as a result of confidence and self-esteem. As guests begin to feel empowered, they mobilize their own internal and external resources to take action and solve problems.

Your role is "not to solve, but to serve"

Your primary role is to provide a secure home-like environment where guests can focus on their needs and take action to solve their problems. You make many contributions to homeless families but your greatest gift is the kindness you offer the guests in the program.

Understanding and using the Hospitality Code

Just as IHN guests are asked to comply with a set of guidelines, you as volunteers are asked to observe the *IHN Hospitality Code*. The code summarizes the IHN philosophy of treating IHN families with dignity and respect. All volunteers should be familiar with the *Hospitality Code*.

IHN HOSPITALITY CODE

1. **It is nice to hear your name.** Learn the names of our guests, too.
2. **Labeling people creates invisible barriers.** Remember that our clients are guests, not “the homeless.” Labeling – whether spoken, or printed on a posted sign – creates divisions and can foster an “us” and “them” syndrome.
3. **Personal questions can be tough to answer.** Do not put guests in awkward positions by asking personal questions. If guests need to talk, give them the chance, but don’t pry.
4. **We all like to keep some things to ourselves.** All information about guests is confidential. Do not discuss guests’ situations with other people.
5. **Everyone can use a little privacy.** Our churches and synagogues become temporary homes for our guests. Knock and/or ask permission before entering a guest’s room.
6. **Sometimes we need to spend time alone.** Respect guests’ need for quiet times alone with family.
7. **We all have bad days.** Depression, sadness, and hopelessness may come. Allow guests the space to deal with their emotions. Be prepared to forgive outbursts without judging guests as being ungrateful.
8. **We understand and care for our children.** Allow guests to do the same. Avoid contradicting guests’ instructions to their children.
9. **Parents are the care givers.** It is a great opportunity for volunteers to offer playtime, enrichment activities and homework help. However, children need to be within eyesight of parents. Do not offer to babysit so that the parents can leave the shelter.
10. **Adult guests should be treated like adults.** Although our guests are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, remember that they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Whom do I contact if the guest(s) are absent?

Notify the Host Coordinator. If the guests are still absent after curfew, notify the Case Manager on the IHN hotline at (973) 641-5019.

2. As a host, am I responsible for watching the guest's children?

No, the guests are responsible for their own children at all times. If a volunteer is playing with a child, a parent has to always be within sight of the activities. Guests cannot leave their children in the care of other guests. In emergency situations please contact the Case Manager on the IHN hotline at (973) 641-5019.

3. How do I handle conflict between family members or clients?

There may be times when family members or guests get into confrontations with one another. If verbal abuse occurs, volunteers must report any incident(s) to the Host Coordinator who will, in turn, inform the Case Manager immediately. If the Host Coordinator is not available the volunteer should contact the Case Manager on the IHN hotline at (973) 641-5019.

4. Whom do I contact if there is a physical altercation?

Call 911 first. Then notify the Case Manager on the IHN hotline at (973) 641-5019 and the Host Coordinator. The Case Manager or the person covering the hotline will come out to the congregation. The volunteer must fill out an Incident Report that is reviewed by the Host Coordinator who will mail the report to the Case Manager at IHN headquarters.

5. How to handle neglect or abuse of children

If you observe child abuse or neglect, please report incidents to the Host Coordinator so that she may inform the Case Manager. If Host Coordinator is not available contact the Case Manager immediately on the IHN hotline at (973) 641-5019.

6. Guest Guidelines Breaches

It is important that you report any guideline breaches to the Host Coordinator as soon as possible who in turn will contact the Case Manager. If Host Coordinator is not available, please contact the Case Manager on the IHN hotline at (973) 641-5019.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT.

7. How long can families stay at IHN?

Guests are advised that IHN is a 30-day program but extensions are granted if guests are complying with their case plan. They are given an exit date by the Case Manager.

8. What if guests advise us ahead of time that they will miss dinner or be late?

Tell the Host Coordinator who will advise the Case Manager the next morning.

9. What if the guests' children become unruly?

If the parent doesn't address the problem, tell the Host Coordinator who will then inform the Case Manager. She will talk with the parents. Let the Case Manager know if the situation persists. (973) 746-1400.

10. As a volunteer am I responsible for buying any special foods for the guests that they may request?

No. The menu offered by the hosting congregation covers the food needs of our guests. The Case Manager will inform the Host Coordinator prior to the hosting week of any allergies and dietary needs.

11. What do the guests do all day?

Some guests have jobs while some are actively searching for jobs. Other guests spend the day looking for affordable housing, and children attend school or go to daycare.

12. Why do the number of guests vary?

Occasionally, there may be fewer guests than anticipated for dinner or staying in the congregational shelter. It is important for you to know that you are needed no matter how many guests are being served. The Case Manager will inform you of any changes.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT.

Here are some of the reasons for low numbers:

- Guests may have appointments in the evening.
 - Guests are visiting family.
 - Guests work late at their jobs.
 - Sometimes guests miss the van and have to take public transportation to the congregation.
 - Sometimes a family will exit the program without advance notice.
-
- In any case, please be as flexible as possible and offer your hospitality to the families who are in the program. Please feel free to bring along a book or other activity in case there are fewer than expected guests present when you volunteer. You are very important to IHN and to the success of the program.



MEDICAL QUESTIONS

Whom do I contact when there is a true medical emergency?
(Bleeding, chest pains, asthma attack, labor pains, etc.)

1. **Call 911**
2. Contact the Host Coordinator
3. Notify the Case Manager (973)641-5019.
4. Complete Incident Report an email to Case Manager and send hardcopy via regular mail.

Do we administer medicine?

No. The guests are responsible for purchasing and administering their own medication for themselves as well as their family members. Due to confidentiality contact the Case Manager if a need arises.

What should volunteers do if they suspect guests are using drugs or if drugs are found?

If you suspect drug activity, but have no proof call the Host Coordinator who will reach out to the Case Manager. If you witness drug use or find drugs, call the IHN hotline. Also inform the Host Coordinator. The guests involved will be removed from the program. **Volunteers should never confront the guest in this situation.**

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

1. **Phone 911**, the Rescue Squad, or Police
2. A volunteer should accompany the guest to the hospital. If a sufficient number of volunteers are not present to permit one to go to the hospital, call the backup volunteer or Host Coordinator to accompany the guest (or meet them at the hospital).
3. **Report** the emergency to the Host Coordinator and IHN Case Manager (973)641-5019.
4. The accompanying volunteer or backup volunteer must **report back** as soon as possible concerning medical status and arrangements.
5. **Record and date** all information in the hospitality logbook.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Keep this form with required phone numbers posted near all telephones in the congregation hospitality areas.

Important Phone Numbers

Fire Department: _____

Rescue Squad: _____

Police: _____

On-call Physician or Nurse:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Hospital Emergency Room: _____

Primary Volunteer Coordinator:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Backup Volunteer:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

IHN Case Manager; Danita Hinnant

Office: 973-746-1400, press 2

24-Hour Emergency #: 973-641-5019

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK HEALTH SAFETY

1. Wear latex plastic gloves when bandaging cuts, changing diapers, changing wet beds, cleaning up bodily fluids, etc.
2. Use an ounce of bleach in dish water if you do not use a dishwasher.
3. Use a cup of bleach in the washer when laundering sheets, towels, and other program laundry.
4. Use disinfectant when cleaning bathrooms.
5. Use solution of one part bleach to nine parts water to disinfect diaper changing areas and any areas where blood or other bodily fluid has spilled.
6. Wash hands with soap and water after performing any of the tasks above.



GUEST GUIDELINES

1. **If guests are late for morning/evening pickups, they are responsible for finding public transportation or alternate transportation to the congregation.**
2. Guests who have transportation must arrive at the congregation by 6:00pm, unless they are working or have an afterschool program for their child. All work schedules, afterschool sporting activities, and teacher's conference are specified at the time of intake and after entering IHN program.
3. Every family without their own transportation is expected to meet the van each day at the IHN Family Center by 5:00pm; depending on the location of the congregation, the van leaves between 5:30 and 5:45pm.
4. Each family is expected to be on time to meet the van and for dinner every night. **PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE, NOT APPROVED BY THE CASE MANAGER, WILL RESULT IN DISMISSAL FROM THE NETWORK IMMEDIATELY.**
5. Parents may not leave their children in the care of host volunteers or other guests at any time for any reason. Children are the sole responsibility of their parents. **VIOLATION OF THIS GUIDELINE WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM.**
6. For the safety of the children and other guests, all prescribed medication must be specified at the time of intake and after entering the IHN program. The guests are responsible for properly storing all prescribed medications. Medication that needs refrigeration may be given to the host for proper storage. However, the hosts are not responsible for dispensing any medication.
7. All guests must adhere to the guidelines of each congregation. Failure to do so will result in immediate termination from the IHN program.
8. **CURFEW:** Curfew for all guests Sunday through Thursday is 9:00pm, Friday and Saturday curfew is 10m. Guests can exit the hospitality room after dinner but they must return by curfew and inform the hosts that they are leaving the hospitality room.
9. To ensure safety of the guests, they are expected to maintain open communication with the Hosts regarding their whereabouts.
10. The IHN Network is a drug and alcohol free environment. Guests must remain drug and alcohol free while in the Network. Anyone suspected of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will not be allowed in the hospitality room.

GUEST GUIDELINES (CONT.)

11. No weapons or things that can be used as weapons are permitted in the program.
12. There is no smoking in any building, either at the congregation or at the Family Center. Guests are only allowed to smoke in assigned smoking areas.
13. All guests are expected to clean up after themselves and their children. All guests will be asked to perform various housekeeping chores and assist in keeping the day facility and the hospitality room clean.
14. IHN and/or the Host Congregations are not responsible for lost or stolen items.
15. Anyone with a contagious disease (chicken pox, measles, pink eye, ringworm, etc.) must leave the IHN program until the period of contagion is over.
16. There is no eating, drinking or smoking in the IHN van.
17. Guests are not permitted to bring visitors into the hospitality room.
18. Guests are expected to continue to seek housing, financial assistance, and/or employment on a daily basis while staying in the IHN program. Failure to do so will result in termination.
- 19. Guests are not permitted to seek financial assistance from either the volunteers or the host congregation.**
20. To ensure the safety of all, guests will sign out and/or notify a host when leaving the congregation. If a guest is going to be late or absent from the program, he/she must get approval from the Case Manager before 3:00pm.
21. Guests understand that the network provides short-term housing. The maximum length of stay in the Network is 30 days, unless an extension is granted.

VOLUNTEER DEBRIEFING FORM

Please copy & return one copy to the IHN Volunteer Manager at the Interfaith Hospitality Network office, 46 Park St., Montclair, NJ 07042 and one to your Primary Volunteer Coordinator the week following your hosting.

Date: _____ Volunteer Name: _____

Coordinator Name: _____

Coordinator email/phone # _____

Congregation: _____

1. Please share some of the positive moments and experiences during your volunteer role for the emergency shelter.

2. Name some of the negative moments that made you uncomfortable or caused you to feel badly about your efforts.

3. What, if anything, might have been done better during the host week?

How can we make it better?

4. Did you feel well-prepared for your volunteer role during the host week?

In what areas would you say more training is needed?

5. Please list up to five things you didn't know, but wish you had known?

6. Are there other volunteer opportunities in which you would like to participate?
