

## **What does it mean to open a Shelter?**

**Location:** The very first thing we need to consider is if we have a location available that can receive our clients. This location has to be safe, functional, legal and available.

**Safe:** The location must be private, and staff has to easily control who comes in and out of the facility. Our clients are a vulnerable population and people with a different political ideology, journalistic advances or different personal religious beliefs can be dangerous to them. The location also must be up to code with emergency exits, bathroom facilities, and clean to ensure the clients are comfortable and not exposed to hazardous materials or diseases.

**Functional:** Considering the needs of our clients, we need to have enough room in the shelter to feed them, allow them to shower, use the bathroom, receive new clothes and hygienic items, set up cots to sleep, etc. It is important to note that this does not mean that every shelter should have a kitchen and showers. However, they do need to have space to allow volunteer groups to bring cooked meals to feed the families, and outdoor space to have mobile showers brought to them.

**Legal and Available:** When setting up a shelter it's important to check and see if the building is zoned to become a shelter or if any documentation is necessary to allow it to become one. If the building is used by different groups (congregations, community centers, etc.) it is important to set a schedule that allows for the shelter staff to use the location until all the families have left with minimal disturbance.

**Staff and Volunteers:** Our operation is not a governmental one so in order to have a successful shelter we need to have both staff members hired by the organization and a number of volunteers dedicated to the cause that we can count on.

**Staff:** The members of staff need to concern themselves with the standards of operation, shelter management, case management, data entry and volunteer coordination. Staff members need to create a standard procedure for the way the shelter operate to ensure that every client that stays at the shelter receives an above standard care and volunteers can be properly trained and know what to expect and how to proceed every time since staff members are responsible for client care and volunteer performance. Staff members are also responsible to deal with specific cases and needs of the client as well as collecting and handling most of the sensitive data pertaining to the client.

**Volunteers:** Volunteers need to do background check and be screened to ensure that they can work with vulnerable population such as asylum seeker families. Once they are

cleared, many volunteers are very devoted to the work they do and become key members to help keep the shelter functional.

**Donations:** These are necessary to provide our clients with new clothes, hygiene products. We also use donations to improve the shelter operations. Some of these donations include: washers and dryers, kitchen appliances, etc.

**Grants:** Governmental and private grants allow shelters to provide better services to our clients. Food grants allow shelters to have guaranteed food to feed our clients and not rely on donations. Other grants can help with clothing, transportation, and any other need that can help with shelter management.

**Budget Planning:** Starting a new shelter may quickly become an expensive project. It is very important to budget for your new shelter and document expenses. Some grants may be available and retroactively applied given the appropriate levels of documentation. You may utilize software to document your shelter expenses (QuickBooks, Concur ...), or you may want to consider Excel sheets and paper files as a start. The shelter expenses vary depending on the capacity (number of beds). It is also advised that you estimate your shelter costs based on a per capita rate (cost per person).

### **Guidelines for newly established shelters**

1. Establish standard care that follows an organized procedure ( i.e: arrival- lunch- orientation- medical- showers- dinner- rest)
2. The only volunteers accepted are the ones who have gone through a background check, made a fingerprint card and register with the organization
3. Every volunteer needs to be trained and made ready to serve the families
4. Training of volunteers need to include empathy, respect and bias check towards the asylum seeker families.
5. Every donation received needs to be recorded in the in-kind form.
6. Donation "Wish List" should reflect the shelters biggest needs to serve our clients (i.e: specific clothing, cleaning supplies, etc.)
7. Shelters should include pastoral care for asylum seeking families for their trauma, but also for volunteers and staff members who deal with second hand trauma
8. Food should respect asylum seeking families cultural needs as much as possible.
9. When conducting calls to the clients' families to arrange travel it is important to keep their information confidential and secure.
10. If it is necessary to record a family's credit card information to help purchase a ticket, it is also important to not share this information with other volunteers and shred it the moment the ticket is bought.
11. ICE paperwork should be only handled by staff members

12. Medical information must be kept confidential between medical staff and shelter staff.
13. All clients need to be treated with dignity, respect and compassion.
14. Basic care needs to be provided to the clients this includes: clothing, food, showers and travel arrangements.
15. An orientation to help families understand the next steps of the journey and the rules and laws of USA should be provided.

### **Tools and helpful documents**

- **Intake form:** Used to gather sponsor name, number destination and travel information.
- **Orientation script:** used to talk to the clients, explain their current situation and assured them that they are safe with us.
- **Travel arrangements script:** used to help communicate with sponsor families and get tickets for the families at the shelter.
- **Volunteer sign-up sheet:** used to keep track of volunteers coming and going from the shelter.
- **Volunteer Roles description:** Help shelters in training to organize their volunteer force
- **Travel Guide:** used to help clients traveling get help from strangers if need be and have a point of contact still in Phoenix until they reach their destination.
- **Miles 4 Migrants forms:** To help families who have no money to purchase tickets, or lost tickets or have any obstacles that prevents them from reaching their destination.
- **In-kind Donation Forms:** To keep track of every donation the shelter receives.
- **Food list:** To know what the food needs at the shelter are and to keep track of what we normally order.
- **Volunteer Verification Forms:** For any new volunteers who haven't gone through the screening process.
- **Church Shelter Network lists:** To help communicate with all the churches who receive families.
- **Meal Calendar:** To know who is supposed to come to prepare meals at the shelter.
- **ICE family Lists:** So, we know who we are receiving and best prepare for their arrival
- **Volunteer schedule calendar:** Know which volunteers are on call and we can contact if we are in need.
- **Volunteer Database:** So, we can record and keep track of all the volunteers we can count on.