

**City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services Participant Rights**

**Participants in all Office of Homeless Services emergency housing programs have the following rights:**

- The right to be treated in a dignified manner by all emergency housing staff and participants.
- The right to live in a clean, safe environment.
- The right to confidentiality of all case records, manual or electronically stored, and all other participant information, except in cases involving criminal activity, danger to self or others, suspected child abuse, or reportable medical condition.
- The right to freedom from discrimination based on race, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, medical condition, physical disability, mental disability, and/or familial status.
- The right to access and receive services according to the gender with which the participant identifies.
- The right to dress in accordance with the gender with which the participant identifies.
- The right to access to housing assistance.
- The right to breastfeed a child in any location, public or private, whether or not the mother's breast is covered, in accordance with Philadelphia and Pennsylvania law.<sup>1</sup>
- The right to leave the emergency housing premises to engage in other activities during the day or night, including work, training, housing appointments, managing personal affairs (family matters and family-oriented activities, religious activities, community affairs, etc.)
- The right to overnight absences (i.e. spending time away from the emergency housing facility) **during special circumstances**, such as work or managing personal affairs (family matters and family oriented activities, religious activities, child related activities such as camp or court ordered visits, etc.). The participant is expected to provide advance notice regarding the need for absence and, where applicable, documentation verifying the visit.
- The right to be informed of program rules, regulations, policies, and codes of conduct.
- The right to be informed of the drug & alcohol testing procedures of the program (if applicable) and to receive assistance irrespective of refusal to be tested.
- The right to be informed of the prohibition on and consequences of the following activities (threats to health and safety):
  - Physical violence to other participants or staff.
  - Sexual violence to other participants or staff.
  - Terroristic threats towards other participants or staff.
  - Possession of a weapon on-site.
  - Destruction of emergency housing property or the property of staff or other participants.
  - Possession, sale, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol on-site.
  - Illegal activity onsite (theft, rape, stealing, etc.).
  - **Persistent** verbal abuse.
  - Refusing reasonable mandatory searches conducted by staff and/or security.
- The right to be informed of the OHS procedures for termination.
- The right to register a complaint. A **complaint** is a statement of dissatisfaction with the emergency housing program, program staff, program facilities, and/or services provided. **All participants have the right to initiate a complaint by contacting the OHS Participant Response Line at 215-686-7147.**

**By signing this document, I verify that I have read and understand and agree with the participant rights listed above.**

**Participant Name (Print) :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Philadelphia Ord. § 9-1106. Unlawful Public Accommodations Practices; Philadelphia Ord. § 9-1103. Unlawful Employment Practices; Pennsylvania's Freedom to Breastfeed Act