

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Final Report

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SUMMARY

Purpose. The purpose of this critical, ethnographic study was to (i) explore, describe, and interpret the lived experiences of nine women experiencing first-time homelessness via covert participant observation and (ii) promote positive change in the policies and practices that uphold the discovered problems. Length of shelter stay is a key performance indicator set by the HEARTH Act. The provider expected the women to exit the shelter program within 30 days. This study examines the individual, environmental, organizational, and policy-level factors that influence length of stay.

Background. Only a few studies on the shelter staff-client relationship could be found in the literature and none regarding the power dynamics. Thus, this study expands the scholarship on the nuances of the staff-client interaction in homeless shelters.

Key Issues. The prevailing problems discovered by a critical incident analysis and an operational/compliance audit were that, as a course of conduct, homeless service provider staff and security personnel (i) subjected clients to abuse, harassment, and intimidation as defined in the state's legal statutes (ii) and administratively neglected their clients by failing to comply with organizational and federal policies. Additionally, external rental and employment agencies were found to discriminate against shelter clients. No public advocacy or legislative efforts to prevent such abuses in shelters were found, such as those in place for other vulnerable populations in the state (e.g. nursing home patients).

Results. Clients stayed significantly longer than the expected 30 days ($M=175$, $Mdn=179$, $SD=97$, $p = 0.001$). Length of stay was statistically independent of the clients' age, race, marital status, and parental status. Unemployed clients in the program had significantly longer shelter stays. The longer-than-expected stays of those employed were marginally significant, although the nearly 60-day difference may be of practical importance. Moreover, administrative neglect and staff's misuse of power directly increased clients' length of stay. Finally, women who displayed more self-advocating behaviors had significantly shorter stays, as did those with more education even when controlling for self-advocacy.

Implications for Practice/Research. Increased shelter stays—particularly due to preventable administrative neglect and staff abuses of power—naturally reduces operational efficiency and increases program operating costs. Thus, a Bill of Rights for the Homeless is needed to create stringent legal protections against the maltreatment and discrimination and would, in effect, neutralize the misuse of power. Since the same bases of power that underlie the abusive and discriminatory behavior may also lie at the root of the administrative neglect, this power shift may lead to fewer operations violations by shelter staff. Reduced violations and administrative neglect would decrease clients' length of shelter stay and consequently reduce shelter operating costs.

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INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a social issue of immediate concern during the down economy. In 2009, roughly 1.56 million Americans throughout the country spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2010b). More than 6 million citizens were doubled-up with family and friends in the aftermath of 2.8 million foreclosures and a 60% increase in the unemployment of 14.3 million professionals and blue-collar workers (Sermons & Witte, 2011). Forty-seven (47) million citizens received supplementary food benefits. As a result, families were the fastest-growing sub-population in the homeless community. Alarming, 44% of people experiencing homelessness were gainfully employed. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness were mentally stable, able-bodied men and women who simply could not afford to maintain housing on their own (HUD, 2010b).

The selected community was located in a New England state ranked as one of the five hardest hit in the nation by the recent economic downturn (Rhode Island Housing, 2010). The state had the third highest unemployment rate at 12.7% (Reed, 2010) with a 10% drop in poor workers' income compared to the 2% national average. (Sermons & Witte, 2011). Moreover, the state had the highest rate of seriously delinquent mortgages in New England (Reed, 2010) and saw a 90% surge in its doubled-up population compared to an average 12% increase across the nation (Sermons & Witte, 2011). Given that doubled-up individuals—those living with family and friends for economic reasons—face the highest risk of becoming homeless, the state endured the third largest increase in its homeless population in the U.S. According to HUD (2009), from 2008 to 2009 its homeless population totaled 4,510 individuals in emergency shelters and transitional housing, including 905 single women and 1,706 adults and children in families.

The history of homelessness, its causes, and the emerging shelter movement are well documented (Closson, 1894; Dees, 1948; Hopper, 1990; Culhane, 1992; De Venanzi, 2008; DeWard & Moe, 2010). Nonetheless, little research examines the factors that influence length of stay in homeless shelters (Shinn, Knickman,

About the Author

Ms. King is an entrepreneur in the personal and professional development and training industry, which includes the provision of personnel quality of service evaluations and operational/compliance audits for businesses. She is a former R&D Engineer with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering. Ms. King also holds an M.A.Ed. in Adult Education and Training with a focus on designing, implementing, and evaluating programs for adult learners. In 2009, Ms. King founded International Freedom Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to eradicating child maltreatment worldwide by strengthening and stabilizing the family unit. In pursuit of its mission, the Coalition's focus areas include assisting women in transition and conducting collaborative action research for efficient social service programs.

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Ward, Petrovic & Muth, 1990; Hartnett & Postmus, 2010; Weinreb, Rog, & Henderson, 2010). The literature on the power dynamics present in the staff-client interaction is even scarcer (Dees, 1948; Smith, 1977; Hopper, 1990; Walsh, et al., 2010; DeWard & Moe, 2010; Novotny, 2000) and only hints at their effects on length of stay. As such, this study examines the individual, environmental, organizational, and policy-level factors that influence shelter length of stay. Moreover, the analysis presents valuable insights into the power dynamics present in the homeless shelter staff-client interaction given the paucity of research in the literature on this subject.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DeWard and Moe (2010) elucidate how shelters tend to operate as total institutions whereby administrators and caseworkers assume sole rule-making, decision-making, and administrative power. Shelter planners traditionally view clients “more as problems than as capable of providing potential solutions” (Novotny, 2000, p.382) or as troubled individuals who are unable to function independently (DeWard & Moe, 2010; Hopper, 1990). In order to receive shelter, residents must wholly submit to the set rules, practices, and decision-making of the staff, which systematically erodes their sense of autonomy, dignity, and pride. Challenging the institution only leads to punishment. The rules and the arbitrary enforcement of the rules essentially “exert control over residents and reinforce hierarchy (DeWard & Moe, 2010, p.119).”

DeWard and Moe (2010) conclude that residents find it impossible to simultaneously be a compliant dependent and achieve the self-sufficiency necessary to return to independent living. Yet, the researchers do not examine the underlying power bases and their impending effect on clients’ length of stay. Likewise, Hopper (1990) only skims the surface with the assertion that shelter policies inhibit shelter consumers’ “capacity and willingness... to return to work (p. 27)” but stops short of expounding on the power factors fueling the staff’s actions in carrying out those policies.

Power and Influence in Staff-Client Relationships

Social power is defined in terms of the bases of power that shelter staff use to influence change in the client who is in a dependent position (Raven 2008; Gupta & Sharma, 2008; Pierro, Cicero, & Raven, 2008; Mossholder, Kemery, Bennett, & Wesolowski, 1998). Rather than directly controlling the outcomes in the client’s life, use of these power bases alters the client’s mental, emotional, and perhaps spiritual state by controlling his or her level of engagement through the provision or withholding of resources and the administration of punishments (Brauer & Bourhis, 2006; Davenport & Early, 2010). The client’s altered state then affects their decision-making and action-taking behaviors which result in

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certain outcomes. The six bases of power include informational, expert, referent, reward, coercive, and legitimate.

Shelter staff with informational power possess the information that clients do not have access to or which is unknown to them but is needed to produce a positive outcome for clients (Baldwin, Kiviniemi, & Snyder, 2009). Power lies in the staff's ability to control if, when, how much, and how accurately the information will be shared with the client (Miller, Salsberry, & Devin, 2009). As a result of gaining the new knowledge, the client internalizes the new perspective or change in behavior and independently applies that change in future decision-making without continued guidance from the staff (Pierro, Cicero & Raven, 2008; Raven 2008; Baldwin, Kiviniemi, & Snyder, 2009).

Expert power parallels informational power. However, clients behave according to the information received out of a belief that the staff knows best (Gabel, 2011) but not because they understand or internalize a change in attitude (Raven, 2008). Staff with referent power possess the ability to inspire clients such that clients view them as a model to follow (Gabel, 2011; Raven, 2008).

Shelter staff who invoke reward power provide positive reinforcement, incentives, promises, concrete rewards, benefits, personal approval, respect, or autonomy when clients display a desired behavior. This type of power also entails the staff's ability to remove anything that is undesirable to the resident (Raven, 2008; Gabel, 2011; Mossholder, Kemery, Bennett, & Wesolowski, 1998). Conversely, coercive power employs threats (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.a, n.d.b, n.d.d), punishment, negative consequences, undesirable conditions, or even personal disapproval to force residents to conform to an influence attempt. However, with both reward and coercive power, the change in a client's behavior remains dependent upon receiving the continued stimulus from the staff. The client does not internalize any new perspective or attitude that will prompt the behavior independently.

Legitimate power includes legitimate position power and legitimate power of responsibility or dependence (Raven, 2008; Pierro, Cicero & Raven, 2008). Legitimate position power encompasses a social norm or accepted hierarchical right for staff to require clients to accept or obey their demands and the clients' obligation to comply simply because the staff is in a superior position over the client (Gabel, 2011). On the other hand, legitimate power of responsibility or dependence – the power of the powerless (Raven, 2008) – necessitates that staff have the social responsibility to help clients who depend upon them for help because they are unable to help themselves.

Self-Advocacy as a Behavioral Response

This study attempts to evaluate clients' action-taking and decision-making responses to the homeless shelter staff in terms of self-advocacy. Self-advocacy comprises (i) knowledge of one's strengths, disabilities, rights, and responsibilities (Mishna, Muskat, Farnia, & Wiener, 2011; Kleinert,

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Harrison, Fisher, & Kleinert, 2010), (ii) the ability to make decisions and evaluate one's own behavior, and (iii) "the ability to effectively and appropriately communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert information" about one's strengths, choices, needs, required accommodations, rights, and responsibilities "to those with the ability to change the circumstances that contribute to the problem or inequity" (Clemens, Shipp, & Kimbel, 2011, p. 34).

Studies show that patients in a health and rehabilitation setting have greater success managing their illnesses when they advocate for themselves (Jonikas, et al., 2011). Conversely, patients who perceive an imbalance of power between themselves and their provider or who feel afraid to challenge their provider fail to advocate for themselves. Nonetheless, the literature is void of self-advocacy studies amongst people experiencing homelessness or residing in homeless shelters.

PURPOSE

Initially, the general purpose was to discover the unmet needs of families from vulnerable populations to inform program planning for the author's nonprofit organization. However, surprising incidents occurred between staff and clients in a homeless shelter during the first week of data collection. Thus, the purpose became two-fold: (i) to explore, describe, and critically interpret the lived experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and (ii) to promote positive change in the policies and practices that uphold the discovered problems.

Problem Statement

The problem statement emerged throughout data collection. The problem was that, as a course of conduct, homeless service provider staff and security personnel (i) harassed, intimidated, and mentally and verbally abused their homeless clients—as defined in the state's legal statutes—and (ii) administratively neglected their clients by failing to comply with organizational and federal policies.

Research Questions

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act, or HEARTH, specifies "length of time homeless" (HUD, 2010a, p. 7) as one of the key performance indicators for Continuums of Care (CoC's) and related programs. High performing CoC's and programs have a mean length of homeless episodes that is less than 20 days (HUD, 2010a, p. 9). This study focused on:

- RQ1. Is the typical length of stay for women in a homeless shelter program 30 days or less?
- RQ2. What individual factors influence length of stay?
- RQ3. What environmental factors influence length of stay?
- RQ4. What organizational factors influence length of stay?
- RQ5. What policy-level factors influence length of stay?

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

1. "Homeless" means an individual or family who is (i) undomiciled, has no fixed address, or lacks a fixed regular nighttime residence, or who (ii) resides in a place not designed for regular sleeping accommodation for human beings including living on the streets, resides in a shelter, resides in a residential program for victims of domestic violence, or resides in a hotel/motel on a temporary basis. (New York Senate, 2011)
2. "Abuse" means (i) any conduct which harms or is likely to physically harm the client or resident except where the conduct is a part of the care and treatment, and in furtherance of the health and safety of the patient or resident; or (ii) intentionally engaging in a pattern of harassing conduct which causes or is likely to cause emotional or psychological harm to a client or resident, including but not limited to, ridiculing or demeaning a client or resident, making derogatory or abrasive remarks to a client or resident, cursing directed towards a client or resident, or threatening to inflict physical or emotional harm on a client or resident (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.d).
3. "Harassing" or "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means following a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific client or resident with the intent to seriously alarm, annoy, or bother the client or resident, and which serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be such as would cause (i) a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, be in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person, or be in reasonable fear of damage to his or her property (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.a); or (ii) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for a client or resident (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.b).
4. "Course of conduct" means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, evidencing a continuity of purpose (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.a).

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METHODOLOGY and PROCEDURES

The problem was investigated over a 29-week period from October 2010 to May 2011 using a critical, ethnographic research design. The author as principal investigator (PI) spent the first 40 nights in an emergency shelter operated by the largest provider of homeless services in the state (Provider A). She spent the remainder of the study in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) transitional housing facility in a neighboring city operated by a different provider (Provider B). The PI achieved total situational immersion by interacting with providers and accessing services as would a person experiencing homelessness. The author received no research funding or private living stipend during the study.

Table 1: Client Characteristics in Provider A's 30-Day Operation First Step Program

Client Code	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Marital Status	Children	Highest Ed	Employed
P1	23	Black, non-Hispanic	single	0	GED/HS	no
P2	34	Black, Hispanic	married	0	Vocational	no
P3	41	Hispanic	married	3	Vocational	during
P4	42	Native American	single	2	BA	no
P5	38	White	single	0	GED/HS	no
P6*	36	Black, non-Hispanic	single	0	MA	no
P7	54	White	divorced	3	Vocational	no
P8	29	African	married	0	BA	yes
P9	22	White	single	1	GED/HS	no

Note. *Client P6 is the PI.

Participants were selected using comprehensive sampling in Provider A's 30-Day Operation First Step program for women experiencing first-time homelessness. They ranged in age from 22 to 54 ($n=9$, $M=35$, $Mdn=36$, $SD=10$) as shown in Table 1. The majority were single (56%), unemployed (78%), Black or of African descent (44%), with no children (56%). One woman became employed during the study. The racial makeup included Whites (33%), Hispanics (22%), and Native Americans (11%), with Client P2 being included in both the "Black" and "Hispanic" categories. Most had a GED or High school diploma (33%) or vocational certificate (33%). Two had bachelor's degrees and the PI (Client P6) held a master's degree.

Data were collected in two phases through covert participant observation, casual interviews, documents, and policy reviews. Phase I, the problem discovery phase, extended from October 2010 through February 2011. Phase II, the intervention phase (RQ5), began nine days after study start and ran concurrently until study end. For this phase, the author researched, drafted, and advocated for a comprehensive *Bill of Rights for the Homeless* as a policy-level intervention to free clients from what appeared to be systemic injustices in the homeless provider system. The study ended on May 14, 2011

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after data collection for both phases reached saturation and the investigator returned to her home state in the South. However, advocacy efforts for a Homeless Bill of Rights continued post-study.

The PI examines RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4 via descriptive and inferential statistics. An operational/ compliance audit (Institute of Internal Auditors, 2012) using HUD's 60% pass/fail threshold (GAO, 2009) provides further quantitative analysis of RQ4. The Critical Incident Analysis (CIA) frameworks of Radford (2006), Lister and Crisp (2007) and Halquist and Musanti (2010) address the challenge of examining and interpreting the unstructured qualitative data collected for RQ4 that is inherent in participant observation (Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2011). However, only one of Halquist's four probing questions is considered: What power relationships between the staff and clients are being expressed?

RESULTS

As indicated in Table 2, 44% of the clients were still in Provider A's Operation First Step program at the end of the study. Twenty-two percent (22%) were placed in a residential treatment home and 22% exited to apartments. One client found transitional housing in Provider B's SRO unit on her own.

Table 2: Client Length of Stay and Disposition

Client Code	Age	Entry Date	Exit Date	Total Days	Disposition at End of Study
P1	23	4/16/10	12/10/10	235	Residential Treatment Home
P2	34	6/16/10	11/12/10	147	Permanent Housing (HUD-VASH voucher)
P3	41	7/1/10	Unknown	314	Still in shelter
P4	42	8/1/10	1/5/11	155	Disciplinary dismissal to Residential Treatment Home
P5	38	8/1/10	unknown	284	Still in shelter
P6*	36	10/29/10	12/8/10	40	Provider B's SRO unit (found by client)
P7	54	11/1/10	unknown	194	Still in shelter
P8	29	11/11/10	12/9/2010	29	HPRP Apartment placement
P9	22	11/16/10	unknown	179	Still in shelter

Note. Study period was October 29, 2010 to May 14, 2011. Client P6 is the PI.

The mean length of stay was 175 days ($n=9$, $Mdn=179$, $SD=97$) as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. Three extreme values of 29, 40, and 314 days did not pass the outlier test ($z = -1.50$, -1.39 , and 1.43 , respectively) but served as critical cases for inferential and qualitative analysis. The mean length of stay rose to 214 days ($n=7$, $Mdn=194$, $SD=64$) with the two extremely low values removed and settled at 198 days ($n=6$, $Mdn=186$, $SD=52$) when all three extreme values were omitted—a marked 39 and 23 days longer than the overall mean.

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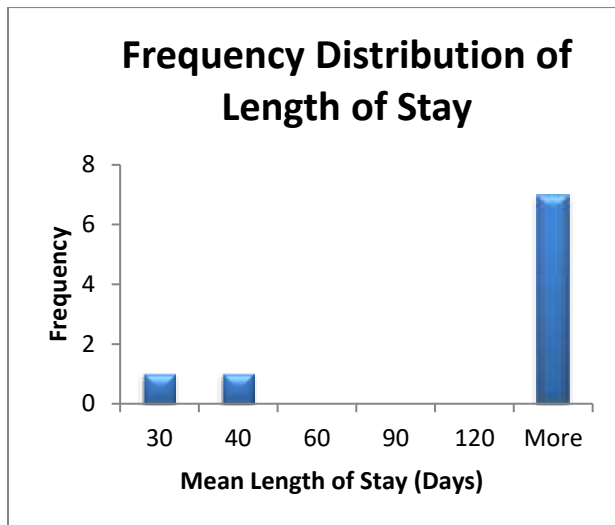


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of length of stay.

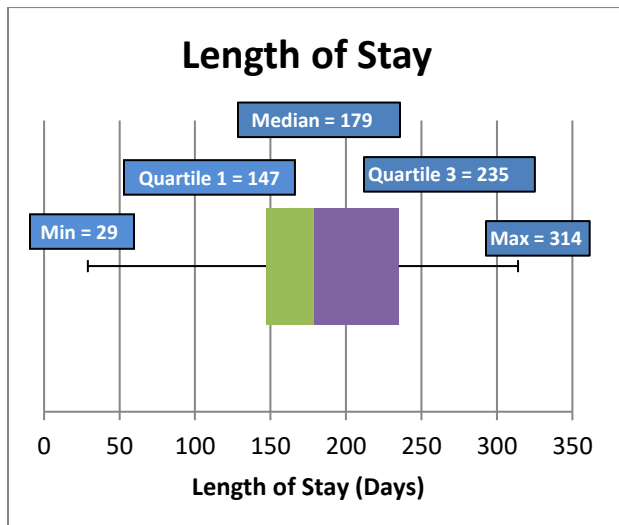


Figure 2. Box plot of length of stay.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Typical length of shelter stay

A single sample t-test determined that the women’s observed mean stay of 175 days was significantly longer than the expected 30-day limit ($\mu_1 > \mu_0$, $t = 4.47$, $p = 0.001$).

Research Question 2 (RQ2): Individual factors influencing length of stay

Figures 3 and 4 highlight a tendency for clients’ shelter stay to increase with age. However, two zero-order correlations—the first with all clients included ($r = 0.18$, $r^2 = 0.03$, $p = 0.33$) while the second removed the three extreme data points of 29, 40, and 314 days ($r = -0.09$, $r^2 = 0.007$, $p = 0.44$)—showed no direct relationship between age and length of stay. Age accounted for only 3% and less than 1% of the variation in length of stay, respectively, and was not statistically significant.

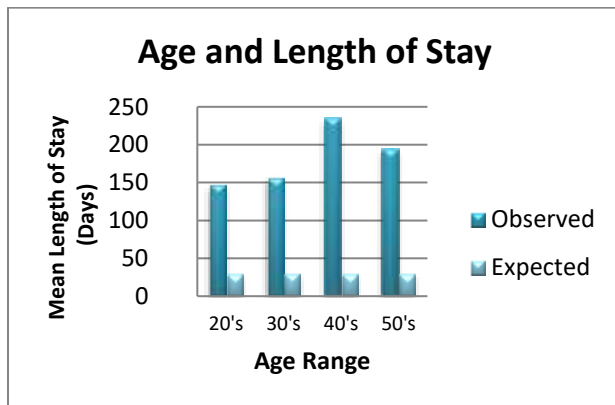


Figure 3. Age and mean length of stay by age group.

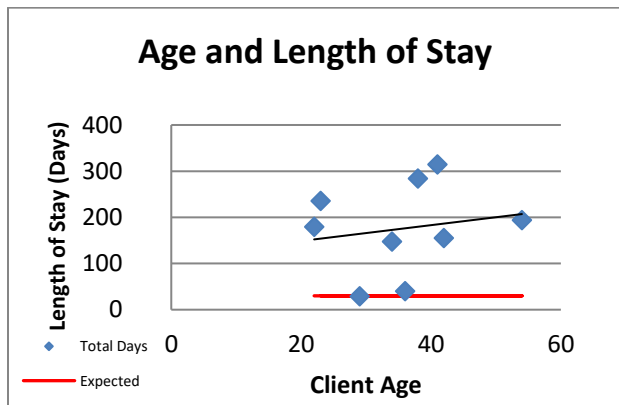


Figure 4. Scatter plot of age and mean length of stay.

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Given that clients belonging to a minority group in Figure 5 outnumber Whites two-to-one, their length of stay was suspected to be longer. Yet, no significant difference was found between minority clients (e.g. Hispanic, Black/African, and Native American combined) and White clients by a two sample t-test ($t = -0.95$, $p = 0.19$). Race accounted for a modest 12% of the variation in length of stay as shown by a point biserial correlation ($r_{pb} = -0.34$, $r^2 = 0.12$, $p = 0.19$).

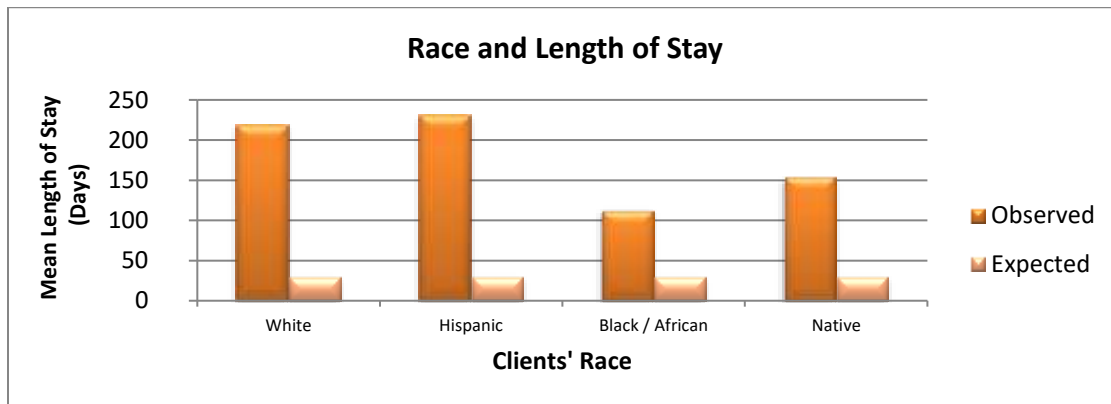


Figure 5. Observed and expected mean length of stay by racial group.

Likewise, a one-way ANOVA [$F(2,6)=0.03$, $p=0.05$] and three point biserial correlations found no significant difference by marital status, although divorced clients appear to edge out those who were married and single in Figure 6.

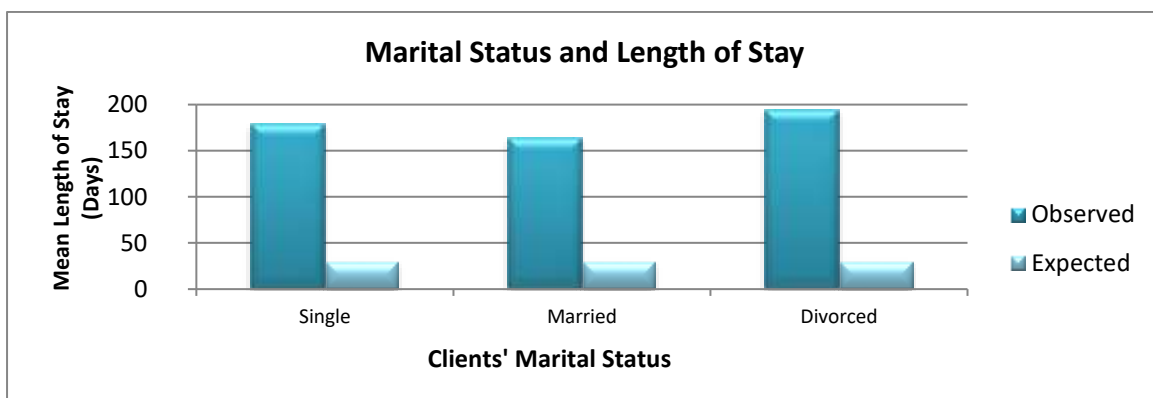


Figure 6. Observed and expected mean length of stay by marital status.

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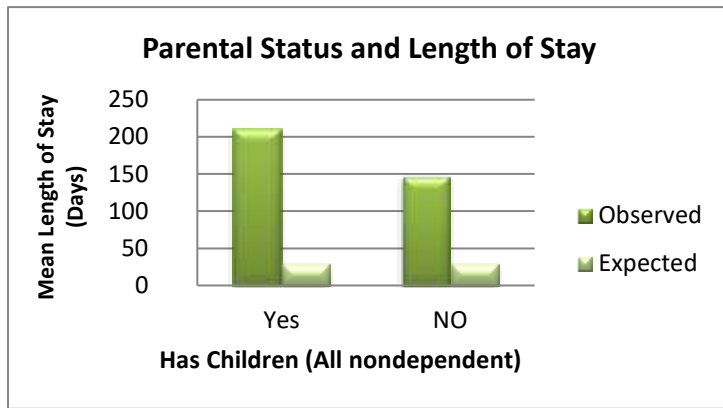


Figure 7. Observed mean length of stay by parental status.

Parental status presented another possible influential factor on clients' length of stay. As illustrated in Figure 7, the 44% of clients who reported having at least one child also had a mean length of stay of 211 days—64 days longer than clients without children. All children were adults at the time of the study and did not live in the shelter. Although a point

biserial correlation determined a weak and insignificant correlation between the mothers and length of stay ($r_{pb} = 0.34$, $r^2 = 0.12$, $p = 0.18$), which accounted for 12% of the variation, the 64-day difference may be of practical importance.

Conversely, education was assumed to have an impact on clients' shelter stay after reviewing Figures 8 and 9. A zero-order correlation showed a very strong, significant, inverse relationship between length of stay and education ($r = -0.98$, $r^2 = 0.97$, $p = 0.008$), where education level explained nearly 97% of the variation.

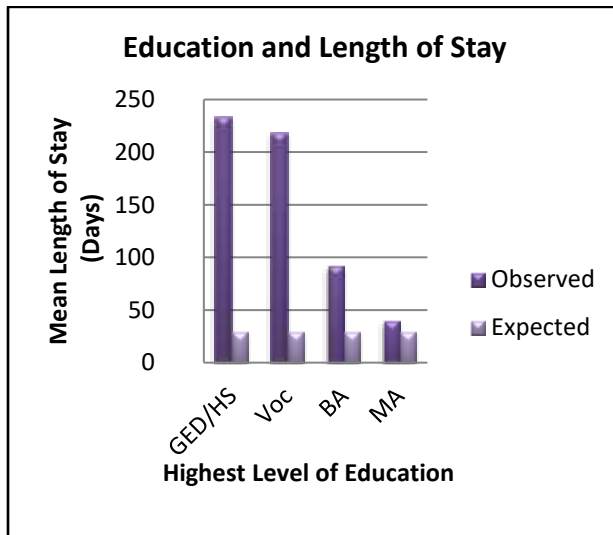


Figure 8. Mean length of stay by educational level.

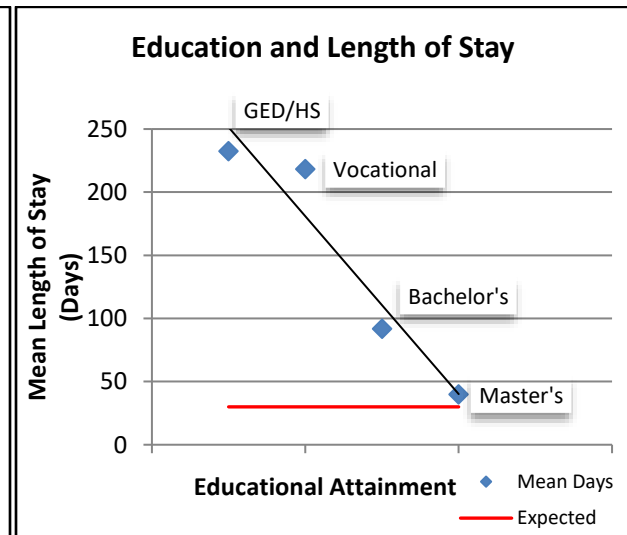


Figure 9. Scatter plot of education and length of stay.

Further, a point biserial correlation confirmed a very strong, significant, inverse relationship between length of stay and self-advocacy ($r_{pb} = -0.82$, $r^2 = 0.67$, $p = 0.003$) shown in Figure 10 and emphasized by Clients P6 and P8. In fact, self-advocacy accounted for 67% of the variation in length of stay.

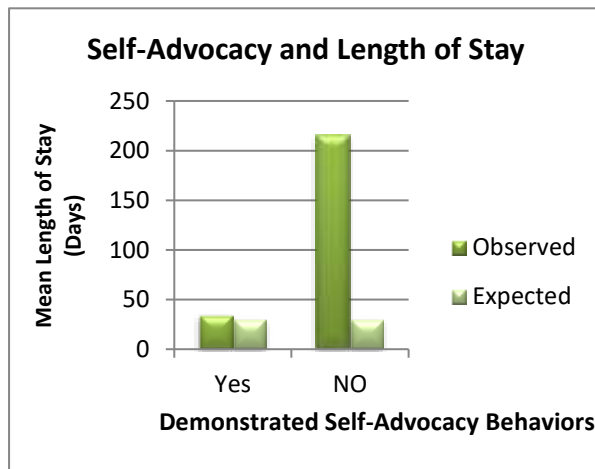


Figure 10. Observed length of stay by self-advocacy.

Education and Self-Advocacy

A point biserial correlation determined that women with more education tended to advocate for themselves significantly more than women with less education ($r_{pb} = -0.77$, $r^2 = 0.59$, $p = 0.007$). However, first order partial correlations revealed that self-advocacy (k) had no effect on the relationship between education (i) and length of stay (j), $r_{ij.k} = -0.97$, $r^2 = 0.93$, $t = -9.08$, $p = 0.0001$ (two-tailed).

Even when controlling for the effect of self-

advocacy, education explains 93% of the variation in length of stay. Further, first order partial correlations showed that education (i) had an insignificant, antecedent control effect on the direct path from self-advocacy (k) to length of stay or shelter exit (j), $r_{kj.i} = -0.55$, $r^2 = 0.30$, $t = -1.61$, $p = 0.16$ (two-tailed). Although statistically insignificant, this finding may be of practical importance. Thus, when controlling for the effect of education, self-advocating behaviors alone may explain only 30% of the variation in length of stay compared to 67% with education included.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): Environmental factors influencing length of stay

Hypothesis Thirteen

H_0 : Unemployed clients stay 30 days or less as expected by the shelter provider.

H_{13} : Clients who are unemployed have longer shelter stays.

A single sample t-test for all unemployed clients only revealed that the observed sample mean of 175 days was significantly greater than the expected 30 days ($\mu_{13} > \mu_0$, $t = 5.78$, $p = 0.0003$). The null hypothesis must be rejected. The unemployed women in the program had significantly longer shelter stays than the expected 30 days.

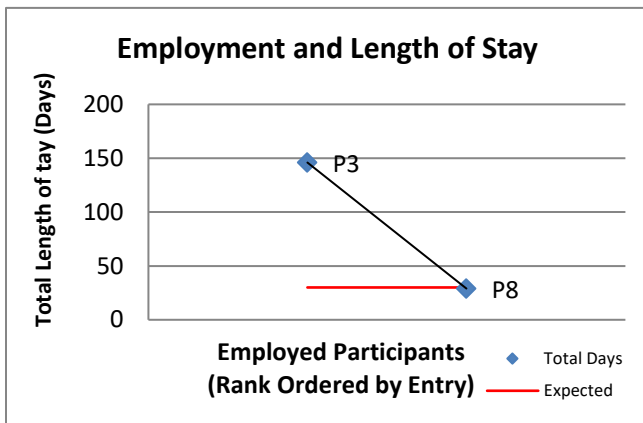
Hypothesis Fourteen

H_0 : Employed clients stay 30 days or less as expected by the shelter provider.

H_{14} : Clients who are gainfully employed have shorter shelter stays.

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A single sample t-test for the two employed women depicted in Figure 11 yielded a different result. Client P8 was employed throughout her 29-day stay, while client P3 stayed in the shelter for 146 days after obtaining employment. Yet, the t-test determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the women’s

Figure 11. Scatter plot of employed clients’ total stay.

mean 87.5-day stay and the expected 30 days

($\mu_{14} > \mu_0$, $t = 0.983$, $p = 0.25$). The null hypothesis can neither be accepted nor rejected since the employed women’s stay is factually longer than expected. Although not statistically significant, the nearly 60-day difference is of practical importance given the nature of homelessness.

Hypothesis Fifteen

H_0 : Length of stay is independent of employment status.

H_{15} : Employment reduces length of stay.

A two sample t-test between both sub-groups uncovered a marginally significant difference between the observed mean of 175 days and the 87.5 days ($t = -1.53$, $p = 0.08$) for unemployed and employed women, respectively, as depicted in Figure 12. Moreover, a point biserial correlation uncovered a weak inverse relationship of marginal significance ($r_{pb} = -0.48$, $r^2 = 0.23$, $p =$



Figure 12. Length of stay by employment status.

0.08) between employment status and length of stay, where 23% of the variation in length of stay was accounted for by employment. Thus, the null hypothesis must be rejected. Clients’ length of stay in the shelter was marginally dependent upon employment status.

Research Question 4 (RQ4): Organizational factors influencing length of stay

Hypothesis Sixteen

H_0 : Shelter staff adhere to documented operational procedures at least 60% of the time.

H_{16} : Shelter staff adhere to documented operational procedures less than 60% of the time.

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Table 3: Audit Scoresheet for Provider A's Operation First Step Guidelines Compliance (Appendix B)

STANDARDS SUBSECTION	POSSIBLE POINTS	LESS N/A	ADJUSTED POSSIBLE	EARNED	SCORE	PASS / FAIL
I. Provider A's Tenancy Limit	1		1	0	50%	FAIL
II. Admission Procedures	3		3	2	67%	PASS
III. At Will Checks	1	1	0	0	--	INCONCLUSIVE
IV. House/Shelter Exit Procedures	2		2	0	0%	FAIL
V. Confidentiality	3	2	1	0	0%	FAIL
VI. Drugs and Alcohol Guidelines	3	2	1	0	0%	FAIL
VII. Medications	2	1	1	0	0%	FAIL
VIII. Safety and Security	7	1	6	3	50%	FAIL
IX. Smoking Guidelines	2		2	1	50%	FAIL
X. Housekeeping and Chores	5		5	2	40%	FAIL
XI. Dress Code	3		3	2	67%	PASS
XII. Personal Hygiene	2		2	2	100%	PASS
XIII. Curfew and Visitors	3		3	2	67%	PASS
XIV. Late Nights and Overnights	2		2	1	50%	FAIL
XV. Visitors and Visiting	2	1	1	1	100%	PASS
XVI. Bedrooms	4		4	3	75%	PASS
XVII. Budgeting	3		3	1	33%	FAIL
XVIII. Community Service	1		1	1	100%	PASS
XIX. Case Plan Development	3		3	1	33%	FAIL
XX. House Meetings	2		2	0	0%	FAIL
XXI. Medical Emergencies	1		1	1	100%	PASS
XXII. Miscellaneous	3		3	3	100%	PASS
XXIII. Noncompliance and Discipline	1		1	0	0%	FAIL
XXIV. Steps to Dismissal	2		2	0	0%	FAIL
XXV. Warnings	2		2	0	0%	FAIL
XXVI. Immediate Dismissal	7		7	4	57%	FAIL
XXVII. Grievance Procedure	17	7	10	3	30%	FAIL
PERFORMANCE/COMPLIANCE	TOTAL	N/A	ADJUSTED	EARNED	SCORE	OUTCOME
TOTAL STANDARDS/POSSIBLE POINTS	87					
	Less N/A Points	15				
	ADJUSTED TOTALS		72	33	46%	SUBSTANDARD
	PASSING SCORE		72	43	60%*	PASS

*Note: Audit uses HUD's Pass/Fail Threshold of 60% and its "Pass" and "Substandard" rating systems (GAO, 2009).

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The goal of the Operation First Step Program was “to provide persons leaving the [Provider A’s name] Rhode Island Assessment Shelter the chance to live in safe and decent temporary housing while receiving skilled counsel and care” (Emergency Housing Guest Guidelines, 2007, p.2). The operational and compliance audit included in Appendix D assessed the staff’s performance on, adherence to, and enforcement of the 87 non-negotiable standards established in the guidelines to meet this goal.

Table 3 shows that Provider A received an overall “Substandard” performance rating for being only 46% compliant with the documented standards. Following HUD’s performance guidelines (GAO, 2009), a minimum score of 60% was needed to pass. Looking one level deeper, staff followed established procedures in only 9 of the 27 areas evaluated—a mere 33% success by subsection. They performed strongest in enforcing policies regarding personal hygiene, visitors, community service, and medical emergencies. Areas in which substandard performance existed included tenancy limit, confidentiality, drugs and alcohol guidelines, safety and security, late nights and overnights policy, case plan development, and grievance and disciplinary procedures. The null hypothesis must be rejected. Shelter staff did not adhere to documented operational procedures at least 60% of the time.

Hypothesis Seventeen

H_0 : Administrative neglect has no effect on length of stay.

H_{17} : Administrative neglect increases length of stay.

Violations of case plan development, late nights and overnights, budgeting, and disciplinary procedures had a quantifiable impact on length of stay. Critical Incidents CI23 and CI35 in Appendix A underscore the dilemma of clients failing to complete all the activities in their case plan as a direct result of case advocates not completing the prerequisite actions needed but that only they could take.

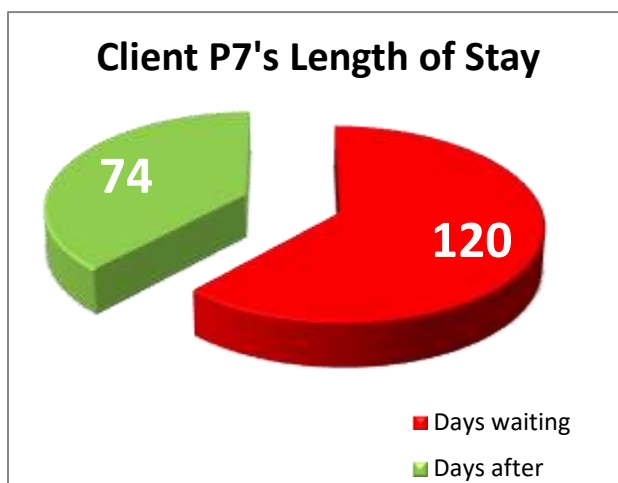


Figure 13. Client P7 waits 120 days for a form.

For example, Client P7 spent 120 days of her 194-day shelter stay waiting for her case advocate to print out a form as illustrated in Figure 13. She entered the shelter upon release from a correctional institution. In Critical Incident CI23, she reported needing a specific authorization form that could only be obtained from her case advocate given her legal history, in order to get a government-issued identification (I.D.) card. With

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the I.D. card, Client P7 would have been able to apply for Supplementary Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) since she had a well-documented history of a qualifying medical condition. Upon receiving approval for the benefits, Client P7 would have had the proof of income needed to request a parole transfer to her home state where she could live with relatives or to exit the shelter via other social service programs.

However, when Client P7 was scheduled to meet with her case advocate to obtain the form or make phone calls to related agencies in an effort to obtain the needed documentation, the case advocate did not show for the appointments. In fact, the case advocate did not give Client P7 the necessary forms until approximately 120 days after shelter entry—a full four months later. Client P7 then started the process of applying for the I.D. card and benefits needed to exit the shelter. The client lamented, “She just went into the computer and printed it out. Just like that. I don’t understand why she wouldn’t do that in the first place.”

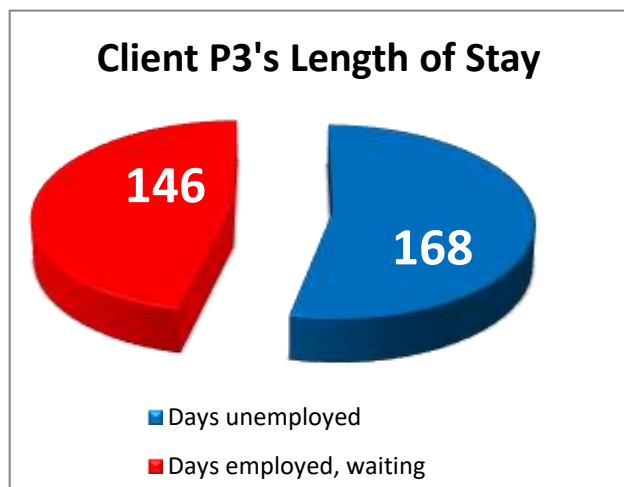


Figure 14. Client waits 146 days for staff to comply.

choosing so long as it meets rent reasonableness tests and passes a mandatory inspection.

However, Provider A’s HPRP Housing Locator frequently missed appointments with the client and a potential landlord—particularly when the client self-selected the apartment. For Critical Incident CI35, Client P3 reported that the Housing Locator simply “won’t respond to me when I find an apartment” that was in a neighborhood “better than the ones she wants to put me in.” The client also stated that she reported her concerns to the HPRP Case Manager. However, no action was taken. She remained in the shelter by the end of the study, some 146 days later.

Moreover, Client P3’s 10-month shelter stay, shown in Figure 14, could have been reduced by up to 146 days or almost five months. This client began part-time employment 168 days after shelter entry, which qualified her to exit the shelter via HUD’s (n.d.) Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program or HPRP.

According to the program’s guidelines stated in Appendix K, HPRP participants may choose any type of housing in any community of their

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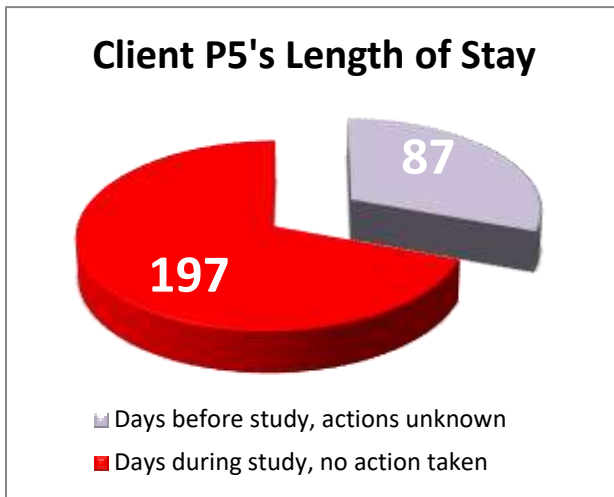


Figure 15. Client in shelter 197 days without action.

Finally, Critical Incident CI23 affirms that 197 days of Client P5’s nine-month shelter stay could be attributed to the above-mentioned standards violations. Client P5 reported her case worker as being “absent for meetings 90% of time” and being unaware that she did not use her bed in the Operation First Step Program. The PI directly observed the client’s extended overnight absences from the dorm five to seven days per week. From the PI’s entry into the field until study end 197 days later, Client P5 reported making no plans with her case advocate or attempts to move.

Research Question 4 (RQ4): Organizational factors influencing length of stay

The CIA analysis classified 34 staff-client interactions documented in the PI’s online reflex journal (International Freedom Coalition, 2010b) and the operational audit as critical incidents. Eight (8) were themed as self-advocacy and removed from the CIA analysis. Of the remaining 26 incidents, 31% resulted in an immediate positive outcome for the homeless clients while 69% led to negative outcomes.

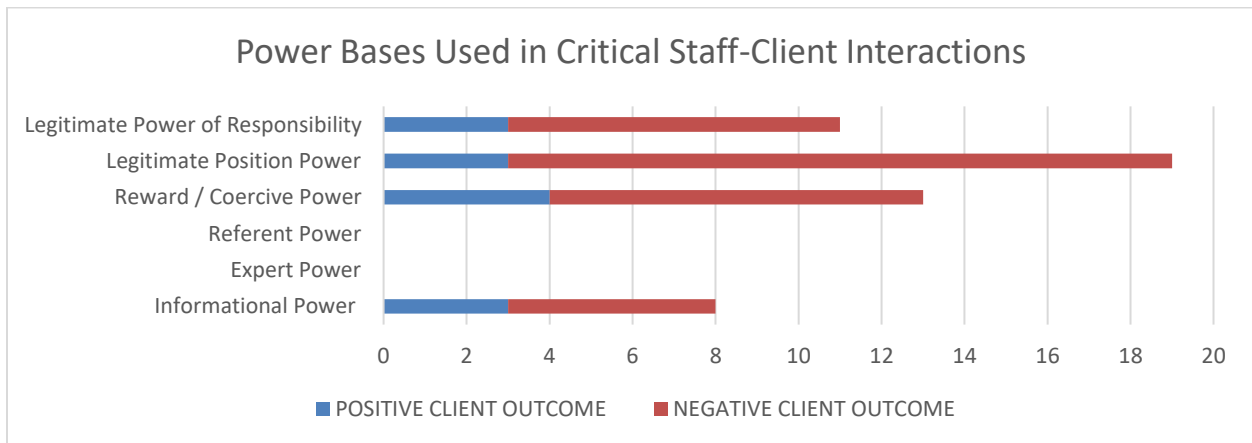


Figure 166. Power Bases Used in Critical Staff-Client Interactions

Figure 16 illustrates the staff’s use of power. Staff employed 51 instances of the power bases during the 26 critical incidents, where multiple bases of power may have been used in any one incident. Of the 51 instances, 25% led to immediate positive client outcomes while 75% led to negative outcomes.

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In the critical interactions resulting in a positive outcome, staff employed reward power (8%), informational power (6%), legitimate position power (6%), and legitimate power of responsibility (6%). Examples include: admitting the PI into the shelter (legitimate power of responsibility) and promising to recommend the PI as an HPRP candidate (legitimate position power, reward power).

The negative interactions exposed the staff's use of legitimate position power (31%), coercive power (18%), legitimate power of responsibility–neglect (16%), and informational power–withholding (10%). For instance, eight critical incidents (16%) involved client abuse, harassment, and intimidation (coercive power) by shelter staff and security personnel that meets the state's legal definition (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.a, n.d.b, n.d.d). The substandard management and administrative neglect of Clients P7, P3, and P5's cases as highlighted by the audit and the refusal to grant the PI access to vocational and HPRP resources illustrates the negative use of legitimate position power, informational power, and legitimate power of responsibility.

Research Question 5 (RQ5): Policy-level factors influencing length of stay

The PI discovered no public advocacy or legislative efforts to prevent abuses and discrimination in shelters, while other vulnerable populations enjoy such protections as the Rights of Nursing Home Patients (Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.d). She conducted most of her legislative research at the Rhode Island State House in the Public Records room. Critical Incident CI9 in Appendix A details how the PI began drafting the *Bill of Rights for the Homeless* (International Freedom Coalition, 2010c) on Day 9 of the study (Appendix D). The bill stood as a policy-level intervention to address the organizational-level policy violations and external discrimination, which could possibly have a positive impact on reducing length of stay in the shelter.

The PI presented the proposed legislation to: leaders (Appendices E and P) and concerned citizens at a community forum (Appendix A); the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights (Appendix L); the NAACP-Providence Branch (Appendix H); the mayor and members of the Civil Rights Roundtable (Appendices N, O, R & S); and other lawmakers (Appendix M).

The study results were cited in a letter of support for the proposed bill issued by the Civil Rights Roundtable (Appendix S). Later, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government formally introduced an adaptation of the Homeless Bill of Rights (Appendix Q).

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Further study is needed to empirically measure the power used in staff-client interactions; the resulting change in homeless clients' attitude, action-taking, and self-advocacy behaviors; and the impact on length of stay and operating costs. Answering all of Halquist's probing questions may inform shelter policy to improve staff-client interactions, produce more positive outcomes, and reduce operating costs.

This study's findings also support the implementation of an industry-wide, customer-oriented, non-negotiable operational and quality of care standards to protect shelter residents from abuse, discrimination, and waste via:

- a. Bill of Rights for the Homeless as the model.
- b. Shelter certification similar to that implemented by Calgary Homeless Foundation.
- c. Shelter licensing process and quality assurance program similar to that mandated for Long Term Care Facilities.

LIMITATIONS

The general population data used in the calculations are from the period October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009. Complete data from the study period (October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011) had not been released by HUD at the time of the study. Additionally, some of the women in the sample did not report exact shelter entry dates. Instead, shelter entry was often recorded as the beginning, middle, or end of the month. Therefore, the margin of error for the clients' length stay could be as high as ± 14 days.

CONCLUSIONS

Education, self-advocacy, administrative neglect, power, and to a lesser extent employment, rise as the most important factors leading to shelter exit. By definition, self-advocacy hinges upon knowledge. Knowledge and education as informational power lead to independence. However, shelter staff consistently withheld informational power from clients, which directly increased length of stay. Instead, staff primarily employed coercive power which requires client dependence and hinders self-sufficiency (DeWard and Moe, 2010) or legitimate position power which possibly created a perceived imbalance of power, reduced or eliminated client engagement, and possibly led to a failure for clients to advocate for themselves (Jonikas, et al., 2011). The lack of self-advocacy increases shelter length of stay.

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Appendix A: Incident List

Code	Date	Observed Incident	Category	Theme
CI1	10/28/2010	<p>PI (Principal Investigator) shelter intake with Provider A.</p> <p>The Case Advocate asked the PI the customary personal history questions. When the PI did not present with any issues listed on the intake form (aside from being unemployed), the Case Advocate returned to the question about mental illness.</p> <p>Excerpt from PI's online reflex journal: "None of the customary boxes could be marked as an applicable explanation for my presence there. Then, she switched her questioning angle, 'Have you <i>ever had</i> depression or anxiety, suicidal thoughts ,or anything like that?'</p> <p>'Sure, yeeeaarrss ago, I did when I hadn't and didn't know how to resolve the traumas of my past. I was depressed and had suicidal thoughts. But that was then. This is now. That's not my life today. That's not my reality today.'</p> <p>Aha! The Case Advocate quickly checked the boxes labeled 'Mental Illness' and 'Long-term' and wrote in 'suicide ideation.'</p> <p>'Hold on,' I protested. 'I don't have a mental illness. I'm not depressed. I certainly don't have any of that long-term. I'm not suicidal. I'm unemployed.'</p> <p>Trying to cover, she explained that they just needed to be aware of any issues that might become a problem during a client's stay at the shelter. 'Oh, no, this is not meant to be offensive.'</p> <p>'It's not offensive. It's inaccurate. It's not my truth.'</p> <p>'No, we just need to...' she hesitated, 'sometimes people come in with chronic iss—'</p> <p>'I don't have chronic anything but chronic unemployment,' I interrupted. 'I'm fine. I'm just an unemployed professional with no money to get a place to live.'</p> <p>'Oh, we don't mean it that way. It's great that you don't let your past define your future. We just have to let staff know if there are any potential problems with a client.'</p>	Negative	Organizational level factors

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		<p><i>Let it go</i>, I told myself. I was not going to argue with her as I had clearly stated my truth. Now, the red flags were waving in <i>my</i> mind.</p> <p>Why was this happening? Why did she <i>have</i> to put a label on me? Is it that unusual that an educated professional who's given so much to the community could become unemployed with no money to sustain housing? <i>Must something be wrong</i> with me to be in this situation? Was it because I said that God led me here? Is it only acceptable for a Community Leader starting and heading social service programs to say that God led her to do it but not acceptable for an individual receiving services in those programs to say following God's directives led her into this situation? Did that make me mentally ill... for the long-term?"</p> <p>Read full detailed account.</p>		
CI2	10/28/2010	<p>PI shelter intake with Provider A.</p> <p>Although the Case Advocate would not remove the inaccurate description of the PI's mental health, the PI did receive a bed in the Operation First Step Program. She checked in the next day.</p>	Positive	Organizational level factors
CI3	10/29/2010 thru 11/1/2010 (Days 1-4)	<p>Upon check-in, the Case Advocate asked the PI "What help do you need?"</p> <p>The PI stated that she needed employment or referrals for possible employment. The Case Advocate did not respond.</p> <p>Later on Day 1, the PI was informed by other Operation First Step clients about the shelter's onsite computer lab. The lab is part of Vocational Services and is used by clients for job searching. The PI called the Vocational Services representative as advised by the other clients. Her voice messages were never returned. Her Case Advocate never mentioned such an available service to the PI or provided a referral.</p>	Negative	Organizational level factors; Administrative neglect
CI4	11/1/2010 (Day 4)	<p>Food stamp shakedown.</p> <p>The PI was in the Operation First Step women's dorm when Security Guard #1 banged on the door and began speaking in a loud, authoritative voice. Two of the clients (P1 and P2) opened the door. The Guard boomed, "Where is the food, ladies? It's the first of the month and I know you got your food stamps. Give it up."</p>	Negative	<p>Harassment, intimidation. Bullying</p> <p>(Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.a; Rhode Island General</p>

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		The two clients who opened the door went into the kitchen area and began bagging food from the pantry. They gave the bags of food to the Guard.		Assembly, n.d.b.)
CI5	11/2/2010 (Day 5)	<p>The PI is permitted access to the shelter’s Vocational Services and computer lab.</p> <p>Excerpt from PI’s unpublished reflex journal: “I finally got into the computer lab here. Once the Vocational Services rep saw that I had an MAEd, had a real resume, and was seriously applying , then she changed her tune. She started sending me all kinds of jobs – jobs that weren’t coming across the wire on Indeed. “</p>	Positive	Organizational level factors
CI6	11/2/2010 (Day 5)	<p>The PI directly experienced abusive, harassing, and intimidating behavior by shelter Security Guard #2. Other clients confirmed his behavior as “normal.”</p> <p>Excerpt from PI’s online reflex journal: “Well, pre-judgments are getting out of hand. Yesterday, Friendly Security Guard tells me to stay out of trouble. This morning, the vocational services rep at the shelter told me to stay out of trouble citing, ‘Some people may be jealous or may think that you think you are better than they are.’</p> <p>Tonight, I walked one of my new roommates [P7] down to the front desk so that she could get a sandwich. She hadn’t had any dinner but has phobias about open places and ordering at counters. As we approached, I heard two of the other security guards saying, ‘She don’t even speak to me. She just walks around with her nose in the air. I’m not giving her my food.’</p> <p>I finally figured out that they were talking about me. The guard distributing the sandwiches didn’t want to give me “his food” as he called it. Finally, he throws a sandwich up on the counter. I asked my roommate what kind she wanted. ‘Ham, if they have it.’</p> <p>‘You have to take what I have,’ spat the guard in charge.</p> <p>So, my roommate slowly approached the counter with her hands folded one into the other, eyes looking downward, and picked it up. We turned to walk away. The guard then said to me, ‘Oh, you don’t want one? What, you too good for us now?’ When I just glared at his ignorance, he tried to smooth it over with, ‘I’m just playing.’</p> <p>I gave him the coolest stare that I could muster and made sure I held his gaze long enough for him to shift his weight</p>	Negative	<p>Abuse; Harassment, intimidation, bullying.</p> <p>(Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.d; Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.a; Rhode Island General Assembly, n.d.b.)</p>

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		<p>from one foot to the next in unexpected discomfort before finally turning and gesturing for my roommate and I to return upstairs. I suppose my <i>unusual</i> presence here is causing a bit of a stir.”</p> <p>Read full detailed account.</p>		
CI7	11/3/2010 (Day 6)	<p>Provider A’s HPRP Housing Locator provides the PI with a job lead, a contact person, and forwards her resume to said contact.</p>	Positive	Organizational level factors
CI8	11/5/2010 (Day 8)	<p>The PI’s Case Advocate dismissed the behavior of Security Guard #1.</p> <p>Excerpt from PI’s online reflex journal: “Unbelievable. I met with my caseworker today and promptly told her of my experience with the security guard. Instead of addressing the inappropriateness of his comments, she simply shrugged her shoulders and pursed her lips. ‘Was he kidding? I don’t know what people’s motivations are for saying things.’</p> <p>Then, she started probing. ‘He must have triggered something in you. Are you sad? I mean did his comments make you think... uh... like... yeah, maybe I do think... you know... uh... that I’m better—’</p> <p>She wouldn’t finish saying it. Perhaps the uncompromising look on my face stopped her from completing her sentence. <i>Did she agree with this guard? Did she condone his behavior? Are you kidding me?</i> She certainly was not expressing any concern for how it made me feel. I felt as if she kept trying to make ‘something wrong’ with me. There’s no other explanation for me being here in this shelter if there isn’t something wrong with me. That keeps <i>them</i> above the residents in some way – at least in their minds. But the truth is they are the same as the residents. They are neither any different nor any better.”</p> <p>Read full detailed account.</p>	Negative	Organizational level factors; Administrative neglect
CI9	11/6/2010 (Day 9)	<p>The PI receives a vision for a Homeless Bill of Rights.</p> <p>Excerpt from PI’s online reflex journal: “I’ve been up since about 3:00am, and it just finally hit me—that which is needed. Materializing in my mind’s eye like wisps of smoke, I saw the words <i>Homeless Bill of Rights</i>.</p> <p>All night I tossed and turned with the guard’s words entwined with my caseworker’s flippant response etching</p>	Positive	Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy-level intervention

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		<p>ruts in my mind. <i>Why should their treatment of shelter residents be any different from serving someone in a restaurant? Why must residents approach the counter slightly withdrawn or cowering while the guard carelessly tosses or slaps the food upon the counter?</i> His actions remind me of how my grandmother used to grab a handful of feed from the barrel and scatter it across the lawn with one flick of her wrist. These are not chickens they're feeding. These are human beings in a vulnerable state who deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect as anyone else in a commercial establishment.</p> <p>After only five days of being here, I saw the truth. Since I am looking through God's eyes rather than the haze of alcohol, drugs, meds, indifference, selfishness, or self-importance, I can see the truth about what's going on inside these walls. A client asked me the other day if I saw the television commercial for this place. I said no. She snorted, 'It's so degrading.'</p> <p>When I inquired further, she said the commercial portrayed the shelter as clean and inviting when her reality of it is much different. So, from her perspective, it's degrading because it doesn't reflect the truth.</p> <p>Here is the truth. All acts of Congress seem to be limited to housing in terms of the homeless. What about their treatment? Members of the Rhode Island Congress toured this facility not too long ago. Were staff instructed to be on their best behavior, to treat all residents with patience, respect, dignity, and care? Certainly had the lawmakers seen what I've seen, something would have been done. Are there no standards, no requirements, or no protocols to guarantee protection from verbal, mental, and emotional abuses within shelter facilities? There should be. God is instructing me to ensure that it happens.</p> <p>Ergo, I'd like to exercise my First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and to petition the government for a redress of grievances on behalf of all citizens. What is needed is a Homeless Bill of Rights."</p> <p>Read full detailed account. See Appendix D</p>		
<p>CI10</p>	<p>11/6/2010 (Day 9)</p>	<p>The PI's Case Advocate gives her nonperishable food items from the shelter's food pantry. The Case Advocate instructs the PI to use the microwave in the staff lounge</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Organizational level factors</p>

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		to cook the food since there is not one available in the dorm area.		
CI11	11/7/2010 (Day 10)	<p>The PI was not permitted access to the microwave to cook the food she was given the day before by her Case Advocate. Moreover, the PI could not resolve the matter because the Case Advocate did not arrive to work at her scheduled time.</p> <p>Excerpt from PI's unpublished reflex journal: "I was hungry. I mean the ache woke me up out of my sleep this morning. I waited until about 10am – so that I would be fuller longer—before I gathered up the oatmeal [my Case Advocate] gave me, along with the bowl from the cupboard that I washed and dried. Items loaded into an eco-friendly recycle grocery bag, I went downstairs to get a guard to let me in the kitchen.</p> <p>The front desk staff lady emphatically said, 'Oh, no. That is not allowed. That's a big no, no.'</p> <p>I explained what [my Case Advocate] told me, but it was no use. I asked what time [my Case Advocate] was supposed to come in so that I could talk to her.</p> <p>'10:30'</p> <p>It was 10:20am. So I waited. And waited. And waited. Finally, at 11 she told me that she didn't think [my Case Advocate] was coming.</p> <p>'But I have a 6 o' clock appointment with her this evening.'</p> <p>The pain was kicking holes in my stomach. I had to get something to eat."</p>	Negative	Organizational level factors
CI12	11/10/2010 (Day 13)	<p>Client business put on hold for chit chat.</p> <p>The PI approached the shelter's front desk to request a bus pass in order to deliver her resume. The staff person was on the phone. She did not acknowledge the PI nor the other shelter clients who stood in line. As the PI stood there for seven minutes, she could hear that the conversation was personal and not business-related.</p> <p>Such behavior was observed regularly by the PI.</p>	Negative	Organizational level factors; Administrative neglect.
CI13	11/11/2010 (Day 14)	<p>The PI presented the idea of a Homeless Bill of Rights at a screening of the documentary <i>You Can Make a Difference</i> in Newport. Bud Cicilline pledges support.</p> <p>Excerpt from PI's online reflex journal:</p>	Positive	Advocacy; Self-Advocacy; Policy-level intervention

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		<p>“After the film, the producers Jimmy Winters and Al Angel were introduced and spoke their words of thanks. Then, the questions began. I waited patiently as others were called to stand up at their seats and ask the panel their burning questions. Finally, I was called to not only stand up but to also come to the front of the room with the panelists to pose my question. I introduced myself as the founder of the Coalition who has worked in the community with disadvantaged families including the homeless for more than eight years. I explained that I moved here on a leap of faith to undertake a spiritual mission which landed me in a shelter. Faces in the audience contorted into various expressions of confusion and surprise.</p> <p>‘The treatment that I am experiencing and which I am observing other residents experience has led me to propose a bill of rights for the homeless such as that passed by the House of Representatives in Illinois. If an organization is working on something like this, I would like join forces. If not, I am willing to get it started.’</p> <p>Before I could return to my seat, several people stopped me with information, suggestions, and offers to help.</p> <p>After the forum adjourned, a gentleman came up to me, gave me his card, and said, ‘Let me know when you’re ready to move on this thing. I’m a former congressman and I know most of those guys up there.’ More people came up to me. Some had the same reaction as the Window Man and the lady from earlier in the day. ‘Please don’t tell me you’re in [shelter name]? Are you still there?’”</p> <p>Read full detailed account. Also see Appendix E.</p>		
CI14	11/13/2010 (Day 16)	<p>Shelter Grievance.</p> <p>The PI submitted a written complaint against an Operation First Step client [Client P4] using the three-part NCR grievance form provided by the shelter. Upon entering the shelter, the PI had been warned by the other clients about her behavior and the previous “three or four” complaints against her.</p> <p>Read account #1.</p> <p>Read account #2.</p> <p>The staff person at the shelter’s front desk took the complaint form and placed it face-down on top of a pile of</p>	Negative	Organizational level factor; Policy level factor

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		<p>other complaint forms about the thickness of 1.5 reams of paper. The staff person did not give the PI one of the three copies for her records.</p> <p>The following evening, the PI met with her Case Advocate and inquired about the status of the grievance. The Case Advocate said, “I don’t know. They didn’t tell me anything about it.”</p> <p>The PI and the Case Advocate walked to the front desk. The Case Advocate asked another staff member where the submitted complaint forms were kept. Once she located them, the Case Advocate spent several minutes looking through the forms, starting with the one on top, until she found the PI’s.</p> <p>The next day, the Case Advocate informed the PI that the Program Manager was aware and would remove Client P4 if she received another complaint.</p>		
CI15	11/14/2010 (Day 17)	<p>The PI returned to the shelter in the early evening. Upon entering, Security Guard #3 –who the PI had previous referred to as “Friendly Security Guard” – was sitting behind the front desk with Security Guards #1 and #2. He began badgering the PI by repeating over and over “troublemaker... devil... oh, the devil picked a good one.” Another front desk staff person was present. She just looked at the guards, looked at the PI, and neither said nor did anything.</p>	Negative	Abuse; Harassment, intimidation, bullying; Organizational level factor
CI16	11/19/2010 (Day 22)	<p>PI drafts and presents <i>Bill of Rights for the Homeless</i>.</p> <p>From 11/15/2010 to 11/19/2010, the PI researched federal, RI, and other state’s laws to draft a Bill of Rights for the Homeless (Appendix D).</p> <p>She emailed the proposed legislation to Bud Cicilline, the former legislator she met at the documentary screening who pledged his support.</p> <p>(See Appendix E)</p>	Positive	Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy level intervention
CI17	11/22/2010 (Day 25)	<p>Think outside the box.</p> <p>The PI was signing in at the shelter’s front desk when her Case Advocate stopped her. The Case Advocate informed the PI that she wanted to submit an application for Rapid Re-housing (HPRP program) on behalf of the PI. However, she explained that she needed to show that the PI will have income. She told the PI to “think outside the box and see if you can come up with something.”</p>	Positive	Organizational level factor

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<p>CI18</p>	<p>11/23/2010 (Day 26)</p>	<p>Response to Bill of Rights for the Homeless.</p> <p>The PI received an email response from Bud Cicilline regarding the Bill of Rights for the Homeless. Mr. Cicilline stated that he shared the bill with Senator M. Teresa Paiva Weed and scheduled a meeting for them to meet with Provider B’s Executive Director and other local homeless advocates.</p> <p>(See Appendix E)</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy level intervention</p>
<p>CI19</p>	<p>12/01/2010 (Day 34)</p>	<p>HPRP Budgeting Class Cancellation.</p> <p>Client P8 was required to attend a Budgeting class in order to participate in the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). The two hour class was only offered once per month.</p> <p>The client had to request a leave from a job that she had just obtained, without pay, in order to attend the class. However, the instructor did not show up, the class was cancelled without explanation, and was rescheduled for a date two weeks later. When the client inquired further about the matter, the Operation First Step Coordinator dismissed her concerns by saying, “Oh, that’s life. Life happens.”</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Organizational level factor</p>
<p>CI20</p>	<p>12/01/2010 (Day 34)</p>	<p>Taking matters into her own hands.</p> <p>Client P8 did not accept the Operation First Step Coordinator’s “flippant, dismissive attitude toward the residents.”</p> <p>She confronted the Coordinator by saying, “It’s as if you believe residents aren’t doing anything or they’re losers. It doesn’t matter if we show up.”</p> <p>The Coordinator continued to say that it was a matter of things outside of her control. Again, she stated, “Life happens. Deal with.”</p> <p>Client P8 was visibly and audibly upset. She asked the Coordinator, “Where are you going tonight? You have a home to go to. This class was required for me to get a home. I showed up. I took off from work to come, but you do nothing to help.”</p> <p>RESULT: The class was rescheduled for the coming weekend.</p> <p>Client P8 later recalled, “I felt like I should take matters in my own hands. It’s like you come this close. They feel like</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Self-advocacy</p>

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		we'll get to you when we get to you if we get to you. There is no attachment to their work, no personal."		
CI21	12/2/2010 (Day 35)	<p>"Lost" intake form.</p> <p>The PI's Case Advocate stopped her in the lobby and said, "They asked me to redo some forms because 'they' lost them. The intake forms."</p> <p>The Case Advocate completed the forms using the same dates and information given to her by the PI during the original intake. When she came to the question about mental illness, she again asked the PI. The PI again said that she did not have any mental illness.</p> <p>This time, the Case Advocate marked "No" on the forms.</p>	Positive	Self-advocacy; Organizational level factor
CI22	12/3/2010 (Day 36)	<p>Mental illness question... again.</p> <p>The PI met with her Case Advocate to supposedly receive a referral to the HPRP program. Instead, the Case Advocate told her, "You can get diagnosed. We have a clinic onsite. Once you get a mental health diagnosis, you can get SSI and go to one of these places," gesturing to a list of three names.</p> <p>The Case Advocate then called another caseworker into the office. She asked him about a place called "Riverwood." He told her that "it's only for people with mental health issues."</p> <p>Then, she asked him about SSI. He said, "again, it's only if you have mental health issues or are on disability."</p> <p>The Case Advocate then turned to the PI and asked, "You don't have a diagnosis do you?"</p> <p>The PI replied, "NO."</p> <p>"Well, you can get an appointment downstairs or at the Providence Center for an evaluation and a diagnosis. Then you could qualify."</p> <p>The PI simply said, "No thank you. I don't have a mental illness."</p> <p>The Case Advocate never mentioned the HPRP program to the PI or gave a referral. When the PI shared her story with Client P7, who openly discussed her phobias or mental health diagnoses, she stated emphatically, "You see. That's what I need. Can I switch to your case worker?"</p>	Negative	Harassment ; Organizational level factor

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CI23	Ongoing	<p>Case worker neglect of duties.</p> <p>Clients P1, P3, P5, and P7 openly complained about their Case Advocates not showing up for scheduled case management appointments on a regular basis.</p> <p>Client P5 stated that her case worker was “absent for meetings 90% of time” and was not aware that she does not use her bed in the Operation First Step Program. She regularly stayed with her partner in the shelters attached Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units.</p> <p>Additionally, these clients—particularly P1 and P7 bemoaned their Case Advocates’ practice of not providing forms required to obtain identification and other social services needed to exit the shelter.</p> <p>For example, Client P7’s Case Advocate did not give her the proper forms and authorizations needed to obtain her identification card until approximately 120 days after shelter entry.</p> <p>Client P7 stated, “She just went into the computer and printed it out. Just like that. I don’t understand why she wouldn’t do that in the first place.”</p> <p>With her identification card, Client P7 would have been able to apply for SSI, for which she had a well-documented and qualifying medical history. With the proof of income, she would have been able to move out of the shelter.</p>	Negative	Organizational level factor; Administrative neglect
CI24	Specific date unknown	<p>Denial of services based upon homeless status.</p> <p>Client P7 was informed by social services that she qualified for a free cell phone through SAFE LINK. However, her application was denied when they put in the shelter’s address, which came back as an “institution.”</p>	Negative	Discrimination Policy level factors
CI25	Specific date unknown	<p>Breach of confidentiality.</p> <p>Client P7 reported an incident with her Case Advocate that “upset” her. The Case Advocate met with Client P7 and a male shelter resident at the same time. Client P7 commented that “because we both are on parole, I guess she thought it was okay. But she was talking about my charge and information about my case that he should not know about. I didn’t think that was right. That is my private information.”</p>	Negative	Organizational level factor; Administrative neglect
CI26	Ongoing	<p>The PI observed shelter staff regularly yelling at, berating, and using hostile nonverbal body language when interacting with shelter clients in the main lobby.</p>	Negative	Abuse; Harassment, intimidation,

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				bullying; Organizational level factor
CI27	Ongoing	The PI noticed a difference when applying for jobs using the address of Provider A's shelter and using a personal mailbox she later obtained. The PI received no responses, not even a confirmation of receipt or denial, when she put the shelter's address on her resume. However, she received responses and job interviews when she listed her personal mailbox address. Other shelter clients reported similar experiences.	Negative	Discrimination
CI28	Ongoing	All clients reported that their Case Advocates made verbal threats to move them to another local shelter which was purported to be "worse" than Provider A's.	Negative	Intimidation; Organizational level factor
CI29	12/6/2010 (Day 39)	Meeting with Provider B and Bud Cicilline to discuss support Bill of Rights for the Homeless. Provider B offered the PI an SRO unit.	Positive	Self-advocacy
CI30	12/8/2010 (Day 41)	PI exits shelter to Provider B's SRO unit in Newport.	Positive	Self-advocacy
CI31	12/27/2010 (Week 9)	<p>The PI's HPRP intake with Provider A.</p> <p>The PI was contacted by Provider A to come back in and participate in the HPRP program. The PI asked if that was possible being that she now lived in Newport and not in Providence. Provider A's HPRP Case Manager assured the PI that she could find housing in Newport as the program is statewide. No problem. Provider A's HPRP Case Manager said that the PI could either select from their list of apartments or find an apartment on my own. She also explained that the rent needed to be in a range that the PI could reasonably sustain on her own after she left the program. "For some people that's \$600 per month. For others, it's \$900," she said.</p> <p>The PI repeated the requirements as she understood them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must attend the budgeting class. ✓ Agree to monthly case management. ✓ Current employment not necessary but must be actively seeking and show proof. ✓ With part-time employment, I would continue to receive help but be required to substantially pay down her credit card debt and show proof every month. 	Positive	Organizational level factor; Policy level factor

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The PI could remain in Newport to meet community obligations and continue to make connections that could possibly lead to employment. ✓ The PI could select her own apartment in a rental range that she could reasonably sustain after leaving the program. ✓ The PI could receive rent/utility payments for up to 18 months as long as her salary was <\$25,600. <p>The HPRP Case Manager agreed that these were indeed the requirements the PI must meet, and they proceeded with the intake.</p> <p>(See Appendices J and K)</p>		
CI32	1/6/2011 (Week 10)	<p>Unprofessional conduct and breach of confidentiality.</p> <p>Provider A’s HPRP Housing Locator showed up for an appointment between a rental agency and the PI one hour late after calling and saying she would be ten minutes late.</p> <p>The Housing Locator also brought her young adult daughter along. She divulged aspects of the PI’s case to the rental agent and her daughter who remained in the same room. Additionally, the daughter viewed the apartments with the PI and the Housing Locator and was thus present for discussions regarding the PI’s HPRP case.</p> <p>(See Appendix J)</p>		Organizational level factor; Administrative neglect
CI33	1/6/2011 (Week 10)	<p>Some apartments off limits.</p> <p>A rental agency in Newport removed the “better” apartments from a list to show the PI as possible rentals after the Housing Locator showed up one hour late for the appointment and said that I would be participating in the HPRP program, which was guaranteed to pay the rent on time.</p> <p>The Housing Locator also went into partial details about the PI’s private case management plan. The agents immediately crossed off several apartments from their prepared list stating they knew those landlords would not participate in any kind of subsidized or public housing.</p> <p>The apartments shown to the PI and Housing Locator were in a rental range of \$750-\$950 but were not the cleaner units listed on their website within the same</p>	Negative	Discrimination Administrative neglect

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		\$825-875 range. No doubt, these were the units crossed off the list. (See Appendices J and K)		
CI34	1/7/2011 (Week 10)	Presentation makes a difference. The PI found another “better” apartment on her own within the price range set by Provider A’s HPRP Case Manager and met with the leasing agent alone. She simply stated that she was awarded a grant to cover her housing expenses, was shown the apartment, completed the requisite application, and was approved. (See Appendices G, J, K and L)	Positive	Self advocacy
CI35	Ongoing	Not allowed to self-select. Provider A’s HPRP Housing Locator did not respond to clients P6 and P3 when they self-selected apartments that were clean, decent, of “better quality”, located in better neighborhoods, and within the agreed upon rental range. Client P3 became employed 168 days after shelter entry, qualifying her for the program. She remained in the shelter by the end of the study, some 146 days later. (See Appendices G, J and K)	Negative	Organizational level factor; Administrative neglect
CI36	1/11/2011 (Week 11)	Transfer, not accountability. The PI’s HPRP case was transferred to another agency when she complained about the conduct of Provider A’s HPRP Housing Locator to the HPRP Manager and Vice President of Adult Services. (See Appendices J and K)	Positive/ Negative	Self advocacy
CI37	1/20/2011 (Week 12)	The PI filed a housing discrimination complaint with the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights. (See Appendices G and L)	Positive	Advocacy; Self advocacy; Policy level intervention
CI38	1/24/2011 (Week 13)	The PI submitted a Letter to the President of the NAACP-Providence Branch requesting support for the Bill of Rights for the Homeless. (See Appendix H)	Positive	Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy level intervention
CI39	1/11/2011 to 1/26/2011	Provider A’s and the secondary HPRP Case Manager imposed arbitrary conditions for participation in HPRP program. (See Appendices G, I, J and K)	Negative	Organizational level factor; Policy factor
CI40	2/4/2011 (Week 14)	The PI submits a formal HPRP complaint to the Rhode Island Office of Housing and Community Development. (See Appendices J and K)	Positive	Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy factor

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CI41	2/25/2011 (Week 17)	<p>The PI formally meets with the RI Commission for Human Rights regarding the discrimination complaint and support for the Bill of Rights for the Homeless. She also invited Senator Tassoni.</p> <p>(See Appendices L and M)</p>	Positive	Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy level factor
CI42	3/24/2011 (Week 21)	<p>The PI presented the Bill of Rights for the Homeless to Mayor Taveras at the Civil Rights Roundtable.</p> <p>The PI asked Mayor Taveras (i) if he was aware of the abuse, harassment, and bullying experienced by shelter residents at the hands of the staff and security personnel charged with keeping them safe and (ii) if he would be willing to consider supporting the Bill of Rights for the Homeless as possible solution.</p> <p>He responded, "I thought you were going to say by other residents. No, I was not aware of that, and I would be willing to work with you on this issue."</p> <p>The PI left a copy of the Bill of Rights with the leaders of the Roundtable to forward to the mayor.</p> <p>(See Appendices N and O)</p>	Positive	Advocacy; Self-advocacy; Policy level factor

Appendix B: Operation First Step Program Guidelines

closed 9a - 4p
dinner Mon-Fri 4:30pm *layce*

Emergency Housing Guest Guidelines

THE OPERATION FIRST STEP PROGRAM



"Operation First Step believes every homeless person should have a chance to have a safe, decent, and clean bed."

Curfew - 9pm Sun-THURS
10pm FRI & Sat

August 2007

Sign in @ front desk
@ curfew



The Operation First Step Program

Emergency Housing Guest Guidelines

This manual represents rules and regulations for the house/shelter. Each guest is required to abide by the rules, regulations and schedules or they may be asked to leave the house/shelter. Operation First Step is emergency housing, where the house/shelter guest shares temporary housing with other similar guests. Operation First Step will offer case management services in order to move guests towards self-sufficiency and independent living within the **six-month** tenancy at the emergency house/shelter with exception of the Assessment House/shelter which is night-to-night shelter.

Getting Started

House/shelter Expectations

The goal of the Emergency House/shelter is to provide persons leaving the Assessment Shelter the chance to live in safe and decent temporary housing while receiving skilled counsel and care. These guidelines are for the safety and protection of both house/shelter guests and staff, and are **not negotiable**. We ask that you read them carefully. Should you have any further questions, please ask a staff person for clarification.

Listed below is information stating the guidelines of the Operation First Step Program. If an item is not clear to you, please speak to a staff member for clarification. A copy of the guide is available upon request. You may refer to them at any time.

House/shelter Admission Procedures

Bags will be checked upon entrance into the apartments and upon exit. The number of personal bags must be limited for safety and fire concerns. Space is limited therefore personal belongs must be kept to basic necessities. Also, we cannot be responsible for the things you bring to the house/shelter. If you have valuable items you want staff to keep safe for you, we will do so to the best of our ability, but we cannot be held responsible in the case of fire or other disaster. When you leave the Operation First Step Program you should take all your possessions with you. Operation First Step Program will hold guests' personal belongings for a maximum of 7 days. Operation First Step Program will dispose of all personal belongings abandoned for 8 days.

At-will Checks

Staff retains the right to do at-will inspections, meaning site inspection by Staff of beds, bedrooms, and personal belongings when necessary for the protection health, safety and well-being of the shelter guest(s).

House/shelter Exit Procedures

- Staff Responsibility
- Guest Responsibility



Confidentiality

All of our staff is trained to maintain confidentiality. All information you share is confidential within the Operation First Step Program. This means that some information may be shared with staff and Operation First Step Program stakeholders.

We will share information about you with people outside the agency only with your written permission to do so.

It is most important that you also maintain confidentiality. Talking about someone you have met in this house/shelter with people outside the house/shelter is never appropriate or to talk about anything you have heard while at the house/shelter.

Drugs and Alcohol Guideline

Illegal drugs and alcohol and drug paraphernalia are not allowed into the facility. However, each Operation First Step Program reserves the right to mandate drug/alcohol supervised screenings as deemed necessary by House/shelter Staff. Refusal of mandated testing and treatment will result in **immediate dismissal** from the Operation First Step Program. Drug and alcohol screening will be performed randomly.

Medications

All medications, prescriptions, and over the counter drugs are to be stored by Staff upon your arrival, or when the medication is obtained. Staff will monitor your medications but is not responsible for administering medications. All medications and dosages will be logged by staff and reviewed by Case Manager.

It is important that all prescription medication be correctly labeled with your name, your doctor's name, and prescribed dosage. We will ask you to get written confirmation from your doctor or provider if you wish to take medication other than as prescribed.

Safety and Security

- All guests must sign in and out of the house this is for safety of the house.
- *Weapons* not are tolerated. Staff will determine the level of discipline for the infraction
- *Threats* will not be tolerated. Staff will determine the level of discipline for the infraction
- *Stealing* will not be tolerated. Staff will determine the level of discipline for the infraction
- *Fighting/Verbal and Physical Abuse* will not be tolerated. Staff will determine the level of discipline for the infraction.
- *Sexual Behavior/Sexual Harassment* will not be tolerated. Staff will determine the level of discipline for the infraction.



* Operation First Step Program is a safe non-violent program. We expect guests and staff to interact with each other in a non-violent and non-threatening manner. The safety of each guest is important, therefore no abusive language, threats, or the use of intimidation is allowed.

No weapons are allowed in the house. If found staff has the discretion to confiscate the weapon. Weapons will not be tolerated. Staff will determine this includes pepper gas and mace as well as guns and knives. Any weapons will be turned over the proper authority for safety.

* This house/shelter will not tolerate sexual harassment of guests, staff, or others in any form. This may include unwelcome sexual advances and/or flirtations, requests or sexual acts or favors, or other unwelcome written, verbal, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

Smoking Guideline

The house/shelter is in a smoke-free facility and shall be done in only designated areas. Smoking is allowed according to state law in an area that is at least 50 feet from the door and in the designated area. Guests are not allowed to smoke in front of the house. Please dispose of cigarette butts and matches in available receptacles.

Health and Wellness

Housekeeping and Chores

Guests have the responsibility to keep the living area, their beds/bedroom and kitchen area clean and in order to provide a health environment. There will be in-house rules for chores posted and everyone is to participate in their room and house upkeep.

Chores will be assigned by staff. Staff has the responsibility to make sure the assigned chores are completed in a timely fashion.

Dress Code

You must be appropriately and fully dressed (down to wearing underwear) for the day when moving about the house at all times. Pajamas, lingerie, etc are only allowed within the bedroom with the door closed. Absolutely, there is no sleeping in the nude.

- Shoes or slippers must be worn at all times.
- Please do not walk around barefoot or with just socks.
- Pajamas and robes are not appropriate attire between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Personal Hygiene

Because you are in close quarters with other guests, personal hygiene must include daily showers and/or bathing. Also, each guest is responsible for the disposal of her sanitary products according to in-house rules.



Communicable Diseases and Health Issues

Please discuss specific medical needs for yourself with the Case Manager. If necessary, the Case Manager can help arrange medical care. Such needs may include mental health services, as well as physical treatment. Your medical status will be treated in a confidential manner and not shared with other guests.

All guests and staff are asked to use universal precautions related to all infectious diseases. If you have or begin to experience any of the following symptoms, **PLEASE** tell a staff member immediately.

- Itchiness of the scalp or skin
- Unusual spots or rashes on the skin
- Pink or draining eyes
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Persistent coughing
- Vomiting/Diarrhea

Please disclose to Staff any health need or situation as soon as you know or have a diagnosis.

Curfew and Visitors

Any time you leave the house/shelter, we ask that you sign out. We ask you to list the time you are leaving, your destination, and your estimated time of return. When you return, please sign back in. Bus passes will be made available to guests at the beginning of each month for those guests that do not have a benefit's bus pass.

Curfew and Hours

In order to help ensure the safety and well being of all house/shelter guests, a strict guideline for curfew has been established by each house/house/shelter that has hours, days and time for daily curfew sign ins and sign outs. All guests are expected to follow the hours established which includes *Quiet Time* and *Bedtime* hours.

Late Nights and Overnights

Late nights and overnights are granted only when required by a job. Written work schedules with a work supervisor's signature and phone number on letterhead or other documentation must accompany any request for a late night or overnight. All other late nights and overnights are allowed only in emergency situations and must be approved by a member of the Operation First Step Program staff.

Visitors and Visiting

Visitors are not allowed in the house bedrooms. Only guests staying in the house/apartment are allowed in those rooms. Occasionally, it may be necessary for



professional (counselors, etc.) to make an appointment to visit. These professionals will be given appropriate space to meet with you such as an office or conference room.

Bedrooms

The following are ground rules for the house/apartments.

- No electrical appliances, food, or beverages in the bedrooms.
- Respect others' privacy and property.
- Staff must inspect all personal electrical items. Extension cords are not allowed.

Budgeting

We will be encouraging you to learn budgeting skills while you are an Operation First Step guest. You will be expected to work with your Case Manager to set up a realistic budget to save funds necessary to get into your own housing. Guests are required to save 40% percent of their monthly income to put a U.S. Postal Services money order to be held by staff. The deposit will be made according to clients individual pay schedule. All residents will receive a receipt for each money order given to the Case Manager.

Community Service

Guests are encouraged to plan for daytime activities which may include employment or community service with your agency or other outside organization.

Case Plan Development

Each guest, along with your Case Manager, will develop a Case Plan that outlines activities to be accomplished during your stay in the house/shelter. The purpose of the Case Plan is to assist you in reaching the goal of independent living. With the assistance your Case Manager, you will be responsible for completing the activities assigned to you in the plan. Guests are required to attend all meetings, training programs, and workshops scheduled by the staff. Following the Case Plan is a condition for continued housing at the house/shelter. There will be some parts of the Case Plan that the staff will dictate, such as Counseling. Each guest will have as much input into case planning as is possible.

Household Responsibilities

It is important that each guest be involved in a specific task that helps to support the upkeep and maintenance of the guest house. It is important that each person share in the household community in some way.

House Meetings

Operation First Step Program house/shelter meetings are held regularly. Staff will announce the time. Also meeting with the Case Manager is a necessary part of your stay here and staff will make every effort to meet you after, or before, work hours.



Emergencies

Medical Emergencies

In the case of medical emergencies, the rescue will be called and you will be transported to the nearest hospital.

Miscellaneous

- Cell phones can be used in the shelter until lights out.
- No guest will be allowed to have ANY pornographic or explicit material while residing at the house/shelter.
- If a guest is found with such material in his/her possessions, such material will be confiscated and the guest **will be dismissed from the house/shelter**.
- Animals are not allowed in the house/shelter.

Noncompliance and Discipline

* Do not break or ignore Guidelines because you disagree with them. Discuss your concerns with staff. Any one or all of these actions by the guest or guest's visitor could lead to immediate dismissal from Operation First Step. Staff will determine the level of discipline for any of the violations written below.

Steps to Dismissal

Failure to comply with the following list of items may be a reason for grounds for termination from the house/shelter unless that action does not reach the fourth offense. Guests when in violation will receive a **verbal notice** their first offence, **written** for the second and third, and will be **dismissed** from the house/shelter on their fourth offense.

Warnings

A warning can be given to a house/shelter guest and/or visitor by the Operation First Step Program Case Manager when a violation of the rules occurs. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** Guests will receive a verbal notice their first offense, written for the second and third, and will be dismissed from the house/shelter on their fourth offense. Please refer to the example of Warning Reasons.

- Bedtime
- Case Plan Development
- Chores
- Curfew
- House Meetings
- Sign-Out

Immediate Dismissal

Failure to comply with either one of these Reasons for Dismissal violations will be cause for Immediate Dismissal from the Operation First Step Program.



- Break of Confidentiality
- Unauthorized Late Nights and Overnights
- Drug and Alcohol Use
- Acts of Violence
- Sexual Harassment
- Visitor's Violation of Rules
- Weapons

Appeals

Grievance Procedure

The shelter shall post the rights and responsibilities of shelter residents that shall include a mechanism for residents to present suggestions or grievances. The grievance procedure shall include provisions for appeal. A copy of the grievance resolution and the results of any appeal shall be available to the resident and/or their authorized representative.

Shelter Client Grievance Procedures

- I. Notice of Rules, Rights/Responsibilities and Conditions
 - a. Oral and written- upon admittance to shelter, staff to review written list of rules, rights (including grievance procedure) and responsibilities with resident.
 - b. Rules to be posted in shelter.
 - c. Community meetings to suggest clarification/modification of rules and to share common concerns shall be held at least once a month.
- II. Types of Violations
 - a. "Major" violation by resident may result in immediate discharge: physical violence, drugs, substantial and disruptive intoxication, destruction or stealing of property, concealed weapons/firearms (not disclosed to staff prior to screening) and failure to leave the premises on demand of staff. May be appealed, but during the appeal process the resident may be discharged from the shelter.
 - b. "Minor" violation by resident does not result in immediate discharge. However, a pattern of minor violations that continues after two written warnings may result in discharge.
 - c. Violation by shelter of health and safety standards or improper behavior.
- III. Warnings for Rule Violations

Written warnings for all violations, major and minor (minor violations can be initiated by oral warning, but written notice should follow promptly). Checklist-type form should be developed and placed in resident file (with copy to resident). A copy of all written warnings should be given to the client within 24 hours.
- IV. Grievance/Appeals Process

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

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A form should be available for residents who wish to file grievances appealing decisions to discharge them, or to complain about conditions and/or staff. Such grievances should be responded to in a timely manner and in writing, so a record can be kept of the results of the grievance.

Any person who is barred for more than a six-month period may make an appeal six months from the date of his or her discharge, and again every six months after that.

Shelter clients may file grievances in the sequence described below:

Internal investigation and decision-making: grievances go up the line inside the shelter, starting with the shelter manager or residents' council, continuing to the executive director (if applicable).

If a grievance is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction, the resident may present the grievance to a 3-person external review committee. This committee will consist of one person who is currently or formerly homeless, one person who works in homeless services (but does not work in the affected agency), and the chair of the Homeless Input Committee of the Office of Homelessness or the person who the Chair designates. The Chair will be responsible for convening the committee, and for choosing the committee's other two members.

This committee will attempt to mediate the dispute. Failing successful mediation, a hearing will be held with the three hearing officers, the person filing the grievance, and a representative of the affected agency. The person filing the grievance may also have an advocate present if they so choose. Minutes of the hearing will be taken. The committee will then make a written recommendation for the resolution of the grievance to the Office of Homelessness for resolution at the next monthly meeting.

Taken from the Homeless Shelter Standards 11/05

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

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Operation First Step Program

Guest Agreement

I understand and agree to abide by rules, regulations and procedures above. I have been given a copy of this handbook and understand that Operation First Step Program staff will provide clarification of these procedures at my request. I understand that these Guidelines can be amended at any point during my stay at the Operation First Step and that I will be notified of any such amendment. I understand that my individual Case Plan may differ from the rules and regulations spelled out in these Guidelines and that the Case Plan will have final authority at those points of difference.

Guest Signature: Sapphire King Date: 10-29-10

Case Manager: [Redacted Signature] Date: 10/29/10

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Appendix C: Operational/Compliance Audit of Provider A's Operation First Step Program

NON NEGOTIABLE EXPECTATIONS/STANDARDS	OBSERVED	COMPLIED	POINTS	EXPLANATION
I. PROVIDER A's TENANCY LIMIT				
1. Operation First Step will offer case management services in order to move guests towards self-sufficiency and independent living within the six-month tenancy at the emergency house/shelter.	Y	N	0	(i) The PI found a discrepancy between the six-month tenancy limit stated in the handbook and the 30-day limit verbally mandated by the case advocates. (ii) Table 2 shows the follow lengths of stay: Client P1: 235 days, nearly 8 months Client P3: 314 days, nearly 10.5 months Client P5: 284 days, nearly 9.5 months Client P7: 194 days, nearly 6.5 months Client P9: 179 days, 5.97 months (iii) Critical Incidents CI3, CI12, CI14, CI19, CI22, CI23, CI32, and CI35 (Appendix A) reveal a pattern of case advocates neglecting to fulfill their administrative duties.
II. ADMISSION PROCEDURES				
2. Bags checked upon entrance and exit.	Y	Y	1	The PI's bags were checked upon entry. All clients reported the same.
3. Personal belongings limited for safety and must be kept to basic necessities.	Y	N	0	The PI observed at least two clients whose belongings occupied more than their allotted space in the dorm.
4. Upon leaving, clients must take all possessions. Personal belongings will be held for a maximum of 7 days. Belongings abandoned for 8 days will be disposed of.	Y	Y	1	A client exiting the shelter upon the PI's entrance left her belongings for about one week. The PI and other clients were told by the Program Coordinator that those belongings were at risk of disposal. The client did return to retrieve most of the items in the large bags. However, the bags that were abandoned were disposed of by the Coordinator. Other clients exiting the shelter during the PI's stay removed their belongings within 7 days.
III. AT WILL CHECKS				
5. Staff may perform at-will site inspections of beds, bedrooms, and personal belongings.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
IV. HOUSE/SHELTER EXIT PROCEDURES				

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6. Staff Responsibility	Y	N	0	No responsibilities are specified in the handbook.
7. Guest Responsibility	Y	N	0	No responsibilities are specified in the handbook.
V. CONFIDENTIALITY				
8. Staff is trained to maintain confidentiality. All information you share is confidential within the Operation First Step Program. Some information may be shared with staff and Operation First Step Program stakeholders.	Y	N	0	See Critical Incidents CI25 and CI32 in Appendix A. CI25: Client P7 reported that her Case Advocate met with her and a male resident at the same time. The Case Advocate discussed her charge and her case, which should have been kept private. CI32: Provider A's HPRP Housing Locator brought her daughter to a private meeting between the PI and a rental agency. She divulged aspects of the PI's case to the rental agent and her daughter.
9. Staff will share information about you with people outside of agency only with your written permission.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
10. Clients must also maintain confidentiality. Talking about someone you have met in this shelter with outsiders is never appropriate.	N	N/A	1	It is not possible to determine what clients said away from the shelter. For the purposes of this study, the PI used codes in place of client names and only included personal details when relevant for analysis.
VI. DRUGS and ALCOHOL GUIDELINES				
11. Illegal drugs and alcohol and drug paraphernalia are not allowed into the facility.	Y	N	0	The PI witnessed drug-money exchanges taking place outside of the facility. Then, the receiving individual entered the facility. Other clients reported seeing drugs and drug use. One admitted to using drugs.
12. Drug and alcohol screening will be performed randomly.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
13. Refusal of mandated testing and treatment will result in immediate dismissal.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
VII. MEDICATIONS				
14. All medications, prescriptions, and over the counter drugs are to be stored by Staff.	Y	N	0	The PI observed that Operation First Step clients kept their medications and prescriptions within the dorm room.
15. All medications and dosages will be logged by staff and reviewed by Case Manager.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
VIII. SAFETY AND SECURITY				
Operation First Step is a safe, non-violent program.				
16. All guests must sign in and out.	Y	N	0	The PI and other clients had to sign in at the end of the day. However, clients were not required to sign out.
17. Weapons are not tolerated.	Y	Y	1	The PI did not observe any weapons. Clients did not report any issues.

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18. Threats will not be tolerated.	Y	N/A	1	Critical Incident CI28 details clients' reports of Case Advocates making verbal "threats" to move them to another local shelter which was purported to be "worse" than Provider A's. Although clients perceived these actions as threats, the actions do not fully meet the definition.
19. Stealing will not be tolerated.	Y	Y	1	Clients P3 and P7 reported an incident of stealing that occurred in January 2012. As a result, Client P4 was dismissed and placed in a residential treatment home.
20. Fighting/verbal and physical abuse will not be tolerated.	Y	N	0	Critical Incidents CI6, CI8, CI15, and CI26 highlight verbal abuse of clients by shelter staff.
21. Sexual behavior/sexual harassment will not be tolerated.	Y	Y	1	The PI did not observe nor did clients report any issues with sexual harassment or sexual behavior.
22. Guests and staff are expected to interact with each other in a non-violent and non-threatening manner. The safety of each guest is important, therefore no abusive language, threats, or the use of intimidation is allowed.	Y	N	0	Critical Incidents CI6, CI8, CI15, CI26 highlight verbal abuse of clients by shelter staff. Critical Incidents CI4, CI22, CI28 further exemplify intimidation of clients by shelter staff.
IX. SMOKING GUIDELINES				
23. The house/shelter is a smoke-free facility. Smoking in designated areas only.	Y	Y	1	The PI observed that all smokers went outside to smoke. No smoking occurred in the dorm or living/kitchen area.
24. No smoking in front of facility. Must be at least 50 feet from the door.	Y	N	0	Smokers often stood next to the building's front entrance.
X. HOUSEKEEPING AND CHORES				
25. Guests must keep living area, their beds/bedroom, and kitchen area clean.	Y	Y	1	Clients kept their belongings in an assigned trunk and cubby. Beds were made daily and dishes were regularly washed. The living areas were free of trash and debris.
26. In house rules for chores posted.	Y	N	0	None were posted.
27. Everyone is to participate in their room and house upkeep.	Y	Y	1	All clients generally cleaned up after themselves both in the dorm and in the living, kitchen, and bath areas.
28. Chores assigned by staff.	Y	N	0	None were assigned.
29. Staff responsible to make sure assigned chores completed in timely fashion.	Y	N	0	None were assigned.
XI. DRESS CODE				
30. Clients must be appropriately and fully dressed when moving about the house.	Y	Y	1	All clients wore appropriate clothing. Pajamas were worn only in the dorm room.

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31. Absolutely no sleeping in the nude.	Y	N	0	One client regularly slept in the nude. No action was taken.
32. Shoes or slippers must be worn at all times.	Y	Y	1	All clients wore appropriate footwear.
XII. PERSONAL HYGIENE				
33. Clients must take daily showers.	Y	Y	1	All clients took showers daily.
34. Clients responsible for disposal of sanitary products according to in-house rules.	Y	Y	1	All clients were in compliance.
XIII. CURFEW and VISITORS				
35. Anytime you leave, we ask that you sign out, list the time leaving, destination, and estimated time of return.	Y	N	0	Clients were not required to sign out and give this information. This action was only required when a client received a bus pass.
36. Bus passes will be made available.	Y	Y	1	Clients needing a bus pass received one.
37. A strict guideline for curfew established that has hours, days, and time for daily curfew sign ins and outs.	Y	Y	1	The curfew guidelines were given to the PI upon intake and enforced by the front desk staff. Sign outs were not enforced as mentioned in Audit Item #35.
XIV. LATE NIGHTS and OVERNIGHTS				
38. Only granted when required by a job.	Y	Y	1	One client regularly worked an overnight shift.
39. All others are allowed only granted in emergency situations and preapproval.	Y	N	0	Four clients regularly reported overnights with a significant other. The PI observed the absences. One of the clients did occasionally receive permission for a family emergency.
XV. VISITORS and VISITING				
40. No visitors allowed in bedrooms.	Y	Y	1	No visitors were ever observed in the dorm room.
41. Professionals may visit in designated areas.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
XVI. BEDROOMS				
42. No electrical appliances, food, or beverages in bedrooms.	Y	Y	1	All clients complied with this regulation.
43. Respect others' privacy and property.	Y	Y	1	This policy was enforced by staff. See Audit Item #19.
44. Staff must inspect all personal electrical items.	Y	N	0	Several clients had hair dryers, curling irons, and electrical toothbrushes that were not inspected.
45. Extension cords are not allowed.	Y	Y	1	No extension cords were present or in use.
XVII. BUDGETING				
46. Work with Case Manager to set up realistic budget to save funds necessary to get into own housing.	Y	Y	1	Only two clients worked while in the shelter. One client reported to the PI that she and her Case Advocate met to discuss budgeting. Information about the other is unknown.

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47. Guests must save 40% of monthly income and put in money orders held by staff.	Y	N	0	Neither client reported saving any portion of their income.
48. Residents receive receipt for each money order given to case manager.	Y	N	0	Neither client reported purchasing money orders and giving them to the Case Advocate.
XVIII. COMMUNITY SERVICE				
49. Guests are encouraged to plan for employment or community service with your agency or other outside organization.	Y	Y	1	Several clients reported volunteering for the shelter in order to receive funds for necessary documents (e.g. birth certificates, etc.). One client volunteered elsewhere.
XIX. CASE PLAN DEVELOPMENT		Following the Case Plan is a condition for continued housing at the shelter.		
50. Each guest, along with Case Manager, will develop a Case Plan that outlines activities to be accomplished during stay in shelter.	Y	Y	1	All clients reported that a case plan detailing the actions to be taken was developed with their Case Advocate.
51. Guests are responsible for completing the activities assigned to you in the plan.	Y	N	0	Clients completed the action steps assigned to them. However, some steps depended upon action that could only be taken by the Case Advocate. Critical Incidents CI3, CI12, CI22, CI23, CI35 are examples of such situations.
52. Guests required to attend all meetings, training programs, and workshops scheduled by the staff.	Y	N	0	One client did not attend the Get Hired program as required. Proper action was taken. However, Critical Incidents CI19, CI20, and CI23 detail how staff obstructed client participation.
XX. HOUSE MEETINGS				
53. House/shelter meetings are held regularly.	Y	N	0	No meetings for the Operation First Step clients were held.
54. Meeting with the Case Manager is a necessary part of your stay here and staff will make every effort to meet you after, or before, work hours.	Y	N	0	Critical Incident CI23 provides examples of how Case Advocates scheduled meetings with clients, clients showed up, but Case Advocates were no shows on a regular basis.
XXI. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES				
55. In the case of medical emergencies, the rescue will be called and you will be transported to the nearest hospital.	Y	Y	1	The PI observed the rescue being called for a resident in the front lobby. The PI also received a report that Client P7 attempted suicide and was rushed to the hospital.
XXII. MISCELLANEOUS				
56. Cell phones can be used in the shelter until lights out.	Y	Y	1	All clients with cell phones were able to use them in the shelter.
57. Guests found with pornographic or explicit material will be dismissed.	Y	Y	1	No guests were ever found with such material.
58. Animals are not allowed in the shelter.	Y	Y	1	No animals were present in the shelter.

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XXIII. NONCOMPLIANCE and DISCIPLINE				
59. Do not break or ignore Guidelines because you disagree with them. Discuss your concerns with staff. Any one or all of these actions by the guest or guest's visitor could lead to immediate dismissal.	Y	N	0	<p>In this audit, clients and/or staff did not comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission Procedures • Confidentiality • Drugs and Alcohol Guidelines • Medications • Safety and Security • Smoking Guidelines • Housekeeping and Chores • Dress Code • Curfew and Visitors • Late Nights and Overnights • Bedroom • Budgeting, Case Plan Development, House Meetings <p>Only one client was dismissed. No corrective action was taken against staff for noncompliance.</p>
XXIV. Steps to Dismissal				
60. Failure to comply with the following list of items may be a reason for grounds for termination from the shelter unless that action does not reach the fourth offense.	Y	N	0	The handbook does not contain a "following list of items" for this guideline.
61. Guests when in violation will receive a verbal notice their first offense, written for the second and third, and will be dismissed from the shelter on their fourth offense.	Y	N	0	The handbook does not contain a "following list of items" for this guideline.
XXV. Warnings Warning Reasons: Bedtime, Case Plan Development, Chores, Curfew, House Meetings, Sign out				
62. A warning can be given to a shelter guest and/or visitor by the Operation First Step Program Case Manager when a violation of the rules occurs. There are no exceptions to this rule.	Y	N	0	"Bedtime" is not detailed in the Guidelines handbook. As discussed in Audit Section XIX, Case Advocates frequently failed to comply with the Case Plan Development guidelines. No corrective action was taken. Moreover, staff did not follow the guidelines for chores, house meetings, and sign out (Audit Sections X, XIII, and XX).
63. Guests will receive a verbal notice their first offense, written for the second and third, and will	Y	N	0	See Audit Item #62

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be dismissed from the shelter on their fourth offense.	Y	N		
XXVI. Immediate Dismissal				
Failure to comply with either one of these <u>Reasons for Dismissal</u> violations will be cause for immediate dismissal from the OFS Program:				
64. Break of confidentiality	Y	N	0	See Audit Item #8. Staff faced no disciplinary action.
65. Unauthorized late nights and overnights	Y	N	0	See Audit Item #39. Clients were not dismissed.
66. Drug and alcohol use	Y	N	0	See Audit Item #11. The client was not dismissed.
67. Acts of violence	Y	Y	1	See Audit Section VIII. Violent behavior was not observed.
68. Sexual harassment	Y	Y	1	See Audit Item #21
69. Visitor's violation of rules	Y	Y	1	See Audit Item #40
70. Weapons	Y	Y	1	See Audit Item #17
XXVII. Grievance Procedure				
71. The shelter shall post the rights and responsibilities of shelter residents that shall include a mechanism for residents to present suggestions or grievances.	Y	N	0	No such rights and responsibilities were posted in the Operation First Step living area or dorm or in the shelter main lobby.
72. A copy of the grievance resolution and the results of any appeal shall be available to the resident and/or their authorized representative.	Y	N	0	The PI never received a copy of the resolution for the grievance she filed in Critical Incident CI14.
XXVII.i. Shelter Client Grievance Procedures - Notice of Rules, Rights/Responsibilities and Conditions				
73. Oral and written—upon admittance to shelter, staff to review written list of rules, rights (including grievance procedure) and responsibilities with resident.	Y	Y	1	The PI's Case Advocate gave to and reviewed with her a copy of the <i>Emergency Housing Guest Guidelines: The Operation First Step Program</i> . All rules and responsibilities listed form the items for this audit.
74. Rules to be posted in shelter.	Y	N	0	See Audit Item #71
75. Community meetings to suggest clarification/modification of rules and to share common concerns shall be held at least once a month.	Y	N	0	No community meetings to discuss rules and common concerns were held or orchestrated by staff.
XXVII.ii. Shelter Client Grievance Procedures – Types of Violations				
76. "Major" violation by resident may result in immediate discharge: physical violence, drugs,	Y	Y	1	Client P4 was the only client immediately discharged for a major violation during the observation period.

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substantial and disruptive intoxication, destruction or stealing of property, concealed weapons/firearms and failure to leave the premises on demand of staff.				See Audit Item #19
77. "Minor" violation by resident does not result in immediate discharge. However, a pattern of minor violations that continues after two written warnings may result in discharge.	Y	N	0	The guidelines do not provide examples for minor violations. However, Critical Incident CI14 documents a pattern of complaints against Client P4 as a result of non-major violations. Yet, no action was taken until she was reported to be stealing from another client.
78. Violation by shelter of health and safety standards or improper behavior.	Y	N	0	Staff violated confidentiality, verbal abuse, and threatening behavior standards, as well as administrative responsibilities related to case management. See Audit Items #8, 20, 22, 51, 52, 54
XXVII.iii. Shelter Client Grievance Procedures – Warnings for Rule Violations				
79. Written warnings for all violations, major and minor (minor violations can be initiated by oral warning, but written notice should follow promptly).	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
80. Checklist-type form should be developed and placed in resident file (with copy to resident).	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
81. A copy of all written warnings should be given to the client within 24 hours.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
XXVII.iv. Shelter Client Grievance Procedures – Grievance/Appeals Process				
82. A form should be available for residents who wish to file grievances appealing decisions to discharge them, or to complain about conditions and/or staff.	Y	Y	1	The PI and at least Client P7 requested and received grievance forms to file complaints against another client.
83. Such grievances should be responded to in a timely manner and in writing, so a record can be kept of the results of the grievance.	Y	N	0	For Critical Incident CI14, the PI did receive any response until she explicitly asked her Case Advocate. The PI did not receive a written response.
84. Any person who is barred for more than a six-month period may make an appeal six months	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.

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from the date of his or her discharge, and again every six months after.				
85. If a grievance is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction, the resident may present the grievance to a 3-person external review committee.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
86. Failing successful mediation, a hearing will be held with the three hearing officers, the person filing the grievance, and a representative of the affected agency.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.
87. The committee will then make a written recommendation for the resolution of the grievance to the Office of Homelessness for resolution at the next monthly meeting.	N	N/A	1	This standard could not be observed or verified.

Appendix D: Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Proposed Rhode Island Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Introduced by: International Freedom Coalition

Developed by: Sapphire Jule King, MAEd

November 26, 2010

Section 1: Summary

BILL SUMMARY

Establishes the Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act which designates “housing status” as a prohibited ground of discrimination, abuse, and harassment.

PURPOSE OR GENERAL IDEA OF BILL

This bill would develop a consumer-centered system of human rights-based principles and practices to ensure that educational, employment, and service programs are free from either conscious or inadvertent bias, discrimination, abuse, and harassment often levied against homeless individuals and families at shelters, meal sites, public and private agencies, on the street, and in any other places where homeless individuals may be found.

Section 2: Rights of homeless individuals, clients, or residents.

No person’s rights, privileges, or access to public or private services may be denied or abridged solely because he or she is homeless. Such a person shall be granted the same rights and privileges as any other citizen of this State. These rights include but are not limited to the following:

1. The right to receive safe, appropriate, courteous, and high quality care, shelter, and services in a timely manner with consideration, dignity, respect, and equality by all.
2. The right to access emergency medical health services in any health care facility doing business in this State in a timely manner with consideration, dignity, respect, and equality by all.
3. The right to receive public services or accommodations offered to any other citizen of this State in accordance with established eligibility guidelines for those services.
4. The right to be free from:
 - (i) discrimination on the basis of race or color, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, country of ancestral origin, housing status or perceived housing status by public and private entities, shelters, service providers and their staff or other clients or residents; and
 - (ii) threats or coercion; mental, emotional, verbal, or physical abuse; harassment, intimidation or bullying; stalking or cyberstalking; physical punishment; damage to or theft of property; or exploitation of any kind by public and private entities, shelters, service providers and their staff, or other clients or residents.
5. As a condition to receive services or shelter, the right to refuse being categorized or labeled with an addiction, mental illness, disability, or other health-related issues which occurred in the person’s past but is inaccurate or inappropriate for describing his or her present emotional, mental, or

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- physical health; and not to be subjected to discrimination, reprisal, or denial of shelter or services for doing so.
6. The right to accept or refuse care and services and to be informed of the consequences of that action.
 7. Any person denied products or services shall be offered the opportunity to be given the reason for such denial in writing within a reasonable period of time.
 8. The right to not be coerced or penalized in any way for not taking any medication or for not undergoing any medical treatment that has not been authorized by a qualified physician.
 9. The right to access his or her own medications and appropriate medical treatment.
 10. The right to have access to his or her personal and clinical records.
 11. The right to employment and training opportunities in accordance with his or her interests and abilities.
 12. The right to vote, which may not be denied solely based upon the person's housing status, notwithstanding any provision of the Election Code.
 13. The right to live in any community in this State in which he or she can afford to live.
 14. The right to choose a type of living arrangements in accordance with local regulations without harassment or interference from any other citizen or from any public or private entity.
 15. The right of visitation with family members, friends, clergy, and professional or public consultants notwithstanding the person's living arrangements, as long as the visitation does not interfere with the smooth operation of the person's place of residence.
 16. The right to manage his or her own personal finances notwithstanding his or her living arrangements, unless (i) the person voluntarily signs a written agreement, sworn to and witnessed before a notary public, authorizing an individual or agency to manage his or her finances, (ii) the person resides in a shelter for homeless persons and has enrolled in a savings program designed to provide rent money upon the person's departure from the shelter, or (iii) the person has been ruled or adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction to be incompetent to manage his or her financial affairs.
 17. In the case of a group living arrangement or long-term care facility, the right to receive and sign any check, voucher, or other warrant or legal tender issued in his or her name before the moneys may be expended by the person's landlord or a public or private agency, unless the person waives the right in a writing sworn to before a notary public. If the person is unable to sign his or her name, the person may make his or her signature with an "X" that is witnessed by 2 other persons not employed or directly associated with the landlord or agency, preferably a relative or guardian of the person or someone designated by the person beforehand.
 18. The right to have his or her personal and clinical records treated and maintained in a confidential manner and to be advised by the agency of its policies and procedures regarding disclosure of personal and clinical records. Homeless shelters shall obtain a voluntary written release from a homeless person prior to disclosing any personal information regarding the homeless person,

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including, but not limited to, name, social security number, and birth date, except in aggregate form. The right to confidentiality of records includes the dissemination of materials to other agencies, either private or public, for any experimental research or investigational activities. The homeless person shall be given the option of whether to release records via informed consent, based on guidelines from the Office of Human Research Protections, United States Department of Health and Human Services.

19. A person shall not be required to waive these rights, via a release of information, in exchange for the goods or services of the provider.
20. Clients' or residents' rights shall be conspicuously posted and a copy of these rights shall be given to any client or resident upon request.
21. The right to assistance in obtaining legal representation to protect these rights.
22. The right to voice his or her grievances through a documented grievance mechanism established by the shelter, meal site, or service provider involving clients or residents, staff, and relatives or authorized representatives of clients or residents, which will insure clients' or residents' freedom from discrimination, abuse, exploitation, reprisal, coercion, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; to be advised on how to voice grievances; and not to be subjected to discrimination or reprisal for doing so. The grievance procedure shall include provisions for appeal.
23. The right to voice grievances regarding treatment or care that is (or fails to be) furnished, or regarding the lack of respect for the client or resident or the client's or resident's property by anyone who is furnishing services on behalf of a shelter, meal site, or service provider; to be advised on how to voice grievances; and not to be subjected to discrimination or reprisal for doing so. The grievance procedure shall include provisions for appeal.
24. When a person has presented to a shelter, meal site, or service provider an internal complaint alleging a violation of the rights under this chapter, the shelter, meal site, or service provider shall be required to disclose in a timely manner in writing to that client or resident the disposition of the complaint, including a description of any action taken in resolution of the complaint, provided however no other personnel information shall be disclosed to the complainant.
25. Housing status or perceived housing status shall be added as a protected class in the State's statutes regarding: Fair Employment Practices, Harassment at Institutions of Higher Education, Hotels and Public Places, and Fair Housing Practices.

Section 3: Definitions

- (1) "Housing status" means (i) the type of housing in which an individual resides or (ii) the status of having or not having a fixed or regular residence, including the status of living on the streets, in a shelter, or in a temporary residence.
- (2) "Homeless" means a person or persons who (i) are undomiciled, with no address or regular residence (ii) or resides in a place not designed for regular sleeping accommodation, a shelter, a residential program for victims of domestic violence, or in a hotel/motel on a temporary basis.
- (3) "Abuse" means (i) any assault as defined in the state's general laws; (ii) any conduct which harms or is likely to physically harm the client or resident except where the conduct is a part of the care and

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treatment, and in furtherance of the health and safety of the patient or resident; or (iii) intentionally engaging in a pattern of harassing conduct which causes or is likely to cause emotional or psychological harm to a client or resident, including but not limited to, ridiculing or demeaning a client or resident, making derogatory or abrasive remarks to a client or resident, cursing directed towards a client or resident, or threatening to inflict physical or emotional harm on a client or resident.

- (4) "Stalking" means harassing a client or resident or willfully, maliciously and repeatedly following a client or resident with the intent to place that client or resident in reasonable fear of bodily injury.
- (5) "Cyberstalking" means transmitting any communication by computer to any client or resident or causing any client or resident to be contacted for the sole purpose of harassing that client or resident or his or her family.
- (6) "Harassing" or "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means following a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific client or resident with the intent to seriously alarm, annoy, or bother the client or resident, and which serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be such as would cause (i) a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, be in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person, or be in reasonable fear of damage to his or her property; or (ii) is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for a client or resident.
- (7) "Course of conduct" means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, evidencing a continuity of purpose. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of "course of conduct."

International Freedom Coalition. (2010a). Bill of Rights for the Homeless. Retrieved October 13, 2011, from <http://strongfamiliesnow.org/blog/bill-of-rights-for-the-homeless/>

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Appendix E: First Proposal of Bill of Rights for the Homeless



Sapphire King <safraking@gmail.com>

Proposed Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>

Fri, Nov 19, 2010 at 4:14 PM

To: jclementcicilline@

Cc: James Vincent <jvincent@ >, j.winter9287

Bcc: drgreggj@, mcoleman@strongfamiliesnow.org, mcoleman@

Good Afternoon Mr. Cicilline,

Please find attached the Bill of Rights for the Homeless proposed by my organization the International Freedom Coalition.

I would like to schedule a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the next steps for introducing the proposal to perhaps the Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias, Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights, the ACLU, and other legislators.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
Child & Family Advocate
Call: 401.808.3075
Click:

Homeless-Bill-of-Rights.pdf
165K

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Proposed Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Bud Cicilline <jclementcicilline@[REDACTED]>
To: Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>
Cc: James Vincent <jvincent@[REDACTED]>, j.winter9287@[REDACTED]

Tue, Nov 23, 2010 at 11:15 AM

Sapphire,

It was nice to meet you at the meeting at Channing Church on the 11th and thank you for sending me a copy of the Bill of Rights for Homeless People. I am very supportive of basic protections for all people, but especially those who are faced with some form of challenge in their lives. I applaud your initiative in this regard.

I would be glad to meet with you to strategize how we might advance such a proposal. Indeed, I would be glad to host a meeting for such a purpose. Perhaps, we could have a preliminary meeting with Jim Vincent, Jimmy Winters, Bob Sabel (RI Legal Services – Newport), Steve Ostiguy and/or Deb Johnston of Fifty Washington Square (operators of the McKinney Shelter in Newport) to plan on a larger meeting with representatives from the General Assembly and ACLU. Locally, I know that Sen. M. Teresa Paiva Weed and Rep. Peter F. Martin are strong supporters of homeless issues.

I am looking at my schedule and find that I have some time slots open on Dec 6, 7, & 8. Please let me know if your calendar is open on any of those dates and, if so, what times are good for you. Also, let me know if it is convenient for you to meet at my office which is at 127 Johnny Cake Hill Road in Middletown.

Thanks so much.

I hope that you will have a warm and happy Thanksgiving.

All good wishes,

Bud

Proposed Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Bud Cicilline <jclementcicilline@[REDACTED]>
To: Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 23, 2010 at 4:37 PM

Dear Ms..King,

Thanks.

I will relocate the meeting.....perhaps at 50 Washington Square. Give me a little time.

I did share the Bill of Rights with Sen. Teresa Paiva Weed. I'll let you know what I hear from her.

All good wishes,

Bud Cicilline

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Proposed Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Bud Cicilline <jclementcicilline@[REDACTED]>
To: Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 24, 2010 at 9:18 AM

Dear Ms. King,

I re-sited our meeting on December 6 to 50 Washington Square in Newport. (It's the building that houses the McKinney Shelter...& is on a bus line.) I have invited Deb Johnston, who is the Executive Director of Washington Square Services Corporation & manager of the Mc Kinney Shelter, to the meeting. I can and will invite other interested parties, but will let you know who they are as I get response. I already gave you a preliminary list of other individuals in a prior e-mail. The only problem I have is the start time of the meeting. I noticed AFTER I had arranged the meeting that you had said in your e-mail you would be available on Dec 6, starting at 10 o'clock. I have a regular 11 o'clock meeting in my office, so I set this meeting for 9:30. Is this doable for you?. If not, we can start at 10 & I'll just leave at 10:45.

All good wishes,

Bud

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix F: Thank You Letter to HPRP Case Manager

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.
270 Bellevue Ave. PMB 205
Newport, RI 02840
Phone: (401) 808-3075
Email: safiraking@gmail.com
Web: www.linkedin.com/in/sapphireking

January 10, 2011



Providence, RI 02903

Dear [REDACTED]

I want to express my gratitude for your dedication to helping women in transition, such as myself, begin to rebuild their lives. Your thoughtfulness and professional consideration for me as a client are much appreciated and do not go without notice.

The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) is proving to be an appropriate hand-up for me as an unemployed professional fervently seeking opportunities to rise out of an economic downturn. When I voted for President Obama, never once did I believe I would benefit from his programs beyond perhaps a tax cut for the middle-class and incentives for small business owners. I am humbled by the experience and grateful for the assistance.

I also appreciated the required 2-hour Budgeting for a Better Future class. Having project budgeting experience, I believe the budget worksheets given out to participants accomplished the stated goal of simplifying the financial planning process. Future participants may also find it helpful to complete a sample budget as a class to gain an understanding of the monthly total of such expenses. Additionally, participants may then further benefit from referring to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training's Wage Conversions worksheet (provided by [REDACTED] Vocational Services) to determine the salary needed to maintain the sample budget. From this exercise, each client can then prepare a personal budget with a reasonable rent amount based upon their current expenses and earnings (if employed) or current expenses and immediate earning potential (if unemployed).

Sharing and discussing this prepared budget with their Case Manager and the HPRP Housing Locator will ensure that clients and their HPRP support team hold the same reasonable expectations when locating an apartment and completing the program case plan.

Thank you again for your assistance. Your dedication is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sapphire J. King'.

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Thank you

Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 2:09 PM


To: [REDACTED]

Hello [REDACTED]

I just wanted to send you this letter of thanks for your dedication to helping me during this transitional phase in my life.

Warmest regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
Child & Family Advocate
Call: 401.808.3075
Click:

 **SapphireJuleKing-HPRP-thankyou.pdf**
60K

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 2:54 PM

Reply-To: [REDACTED]
To: Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Sapphire:

Thank you for the thank you. I appreciate it. Would you be able to meet later this week? I have the application to complete the birth certificate request. I wanted to also check-in.

Let me know if Thursday at 3 p.m. works for you.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 3:19 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

Yes, Thursday at 3pm works!

Is [REDACTED] in the office today? She has not responded to my messages that I left Friday afternoon, Saturday (email), and this morning. I have found an apartment and my rental application has been approved by the landlord. They are just waiting for [REDACTED] to schedule the inspection and move forward.

The rental agent just phoned me because she hasn't received a call from [REDACTED]. She arrived one hour late to an appointment with another rental agent which caused them to scratch the decent apartments from our viewing list. As such, I am afraid the delayed communication with this agent will reflect badly on the landlord's acceptance of the program for fear of not receiving the rent in a timely manner. This is frustrating.

I really do appreciate all of your help and timely attention to my case.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix G: Discrimination Complaint to Commission for Human Rights

INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM COALITION

Building strong families to eradicate child maltreatment worldwide

January 20, 2011

State of Rhode Island
Commission for Human Rights
180 Westminster Street
Third Floor
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commission,

Please accept this letter as an official complaint against the [REDACTED] rental agency. I currently live in transitional housing in Newport and was approved to participate in the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) program. The program pays the security deposit and rent on an apartment of my choosing until I return to full-time employment status and can pay the rent on my own.

My HPRP Housing Locator and I scheduled an appointment with [REDACTED] on January 6, 2011 at 12:00 p.m. She then explained to the agent that I would be participating in the HPRP program which was guaranteed to pay my rent on time every month or subsidize a portion of the rent as I began working. The agents immediately crossed off several apartments from their prepared list stating that they knew those landlords would not accept any kind of subsidized or public housing program. The Housing Locator stated that it was not housing or Section 8; the program just pays the rent. Nonetheless, the apartments we were shown were not the cleaner, nicer units they had listed on their website within the same rental range. No doubt, these were the ones crossed off the list. The next day, I viewed another apartment with a different rental agent. I completed their rental application stating that I had received a grant to cover housing expenses. The landlord approved my application based upon the information therein.

Obviously, I was being provided different housing services through [REDACTED] solely based upon my participation in the HPRP program (and thus housing status) instead of the information asked on a rental application. Had I not been homeless or living in transitional housing, I would not be participating in the HPRP program. Although "housing status" is not currently a protected group under anti-discrimination laws, I propose that it should. During my 40-day stay in a Providence homeless shelter, I experienced and observed other residents being subjected to more such demeaning and abusive practices at the hands of the staff and security personnel charged with advocating for us and keeping us safe. A portion of the journey is documented on the Coalition's *Walk a Week in Your Shoes* campaign website at www.walkaweekinyourshoes.com. As a result, I drafted a Bill of Rights for the Homeless which has been introduced to Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Newport) via Bud Cicilline and has gained the attention of Rep. Peter Martin (D-Newport).

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions or need any further information, please feel free to contact me by phone at (401) 808-3075.

Sincerely,



Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.
Founder/Child and Family Advocate
Email: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org



270 Bellevue Ave PMB205
Newport, RI 02840
United States of America

PHONE (713) 364-9324
E-MAIL info@strongfamiliesnow.org
WEB SITE www.strongfamiliesnow.org

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix H: Letter to NAACP-Providence Branch President & Response

Educating the Homeless to Advocate for Their Rights
Literacy • Personal Transformation Education
Women in Transition • Male Leadership
Efficient Services • Special Needs Youth



Dear Mr. President,

As a long-time admirer of the outstanding work the NAACP has done over the years, I enjoyed having the opportunity to see how you function from the inside. As you indicated during the General Body meeting, the challenges facing our citizens today require leaders who have a fresh perspective of the issues and who offer and pursue with passion the successful implementation of solutions so that the NAACP can continue to serve effectively.

Therefore, please accept this proposal as my self-nomination for Chair of the Education Committee and for Community Education Leader of a new movement to train homeless men and women to advocate for their right to fair, humane treatment and equal protections under the law.

As you know, God asked me to move to Newport on a leap of faith with no money, no job, no housing. He specifically told me that there existed a great community problem for which He would show me the definitive solution. Given my lack of resources, I had to check into a Providence shelter. God kept me at [REDACTED] for exactly 40 days and 40 nights during which time I experienced and witnessed other residents being subjected to an established course of maltreatment at the hands of the staff and security personnel hired to advocate for us and keep us safe. I have published many of the details on the Coalition's *Walk a Week in Your Shoes.com* campaign website.

In short, I observed how the peculiar institution of slavery is alive and thriving amongst this vulnerable population where service providers reign as their masters and the homeless passively submit as their mental slaves. Just as new prisoners must yield their material possessions, shelter residents are required to check their dignity, self-respect, self-confidence, self-determination, recovery from life challenges, past successes, and future dreams at the door upon intake. Just as prisoners are locked away in a tiny cell, staff attempt to place residents into a box of inferiority via the pre-defined categories they assume best describe all homeless individuals—addict, mentally ill, disabled, no high school diploma, etc. I say attempt because I refused to be put in any box other than the box of humanity.

If "the Negro" were replaced by "the Homeless" in the book *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, Dr. King would be describing the current state of oppression of the homeless—and the solution. He recounts the five steps slave-owners followed to "train" a good slave. First, as one master said, "The slave must know that his master is to govern absolutely and he is to obey implicitly, that he is never, for a moment, to exercise either his will or judgment in opposition..." For example, Case Advocates regularly miss or show up extremely late for appointments with their homeless clients. Oftentimes, they are present in the office and simply choose not to see their client. Whenever residents speak in opposition, the staff responds with elevated hostility and a flippant attitude of, "That's life. Deal with it." They established a sense of if you want your needs met to get out of here, you have to wait on me. They established a sense of almighty power. The verbal attacks by the guards which I personally endured also attempted to poison them as my ruler and to put me in my place. When I refused to submit or be intimidated, I was repeatedly called the devil, a troublemaker, high maintenance, or prodded about being too good for them.

Second, the masters implanted a "consciousness of personal inferiority" which was "deliberately extended to his past" to make slaves "feel that African ancestry tainted them, that their color was a badge of degradation." During my initial intake, the Case Advocate asked if I *currently* had any mental health, addictions, disabilities, or domestic violence issues. When I negated all of the above and stated that I was simply unemployed, she asked if I *had ever* been depressed or the like. I answered truthfully about my past traumas which led to depression, alcoholism—for which I am now 10 years sober—and suicide attempts 14 years ago. She immediately marked my intake form with "long term mental illness, suicide ideation." No indication on alcoholism. When I told her that did not accurately describe my current experience, that I have actually made a living helping others to heal based upon my healing journey, she

Community Education Proposal | 1/24/2011

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Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Educating the Homeless to Advocate for Their Rights

Literacy • Personal Transformation Education
Women in Transition • Male Leadership
Efficient Services • Special Needs Youth



refused to correct the form. I did not want to escalate the situation because I needed a place to sleep. However, I *knew* my present truth. My spirit stood firm in the beauty of that truth and, in that moment, I knew that this must be part of God's plan. Each time the Case Advocate met with me thereafter to complete my referral to the HPRP program, she instead tried to make me get a mental health diagnosis so that she could place me in Riverwood.

The final three steps of the training process described by Dr. King are "to awe the slaves with a sense of the masters' enormous power," to make the slaves accept without question "the master's criteria of what was good and true and beautiful," and "to impress Negroes with their helplessness: to create in them a habit of perfect dependence upon their masters." Just nine days after arriving at [REDACTED] and experiencing this disheartening treatment firsthand, God gave me the vision to draft a Bill of Rights for the Homeless. Five days later, He led me to a community forum on homelessness in Newport where I spoke about this vision. Former Congressman Bud Cicilline approached me afterward and pledged his support. The following week, I researched, wrote, and submitted the bill to Mr. Cicilline. He immediately forwarded it to President of the Senate Teresa Paiva Weed. Two weeks later, I met with him and Deb Johnston, the executive director of the McKinney shelter in Newport. After hearing my story and the leap of faith that led me here, Ms. Johnston offered me a room in one of their transitional housing units. After 40 days and 40 nights at Crossroads, I finally left for Newport—God's original destination for me. Through my dependence upon and strength in God, my true master, I got out. Some of my roommates at the shelter who believe they must wait on the Case Advocates to complete much needed paperwork and provide referrals are still there.

Interestingly, a few weeks later, the HPRP Case Manager at Crossroads contacted me and offered me the opportunity to participate in the program. Initially, she agreed that I could find my own apartment in Newport. However, after the HPRP Housing Locator decided that I should live in an apartment on her housing list in a low-income area, she refused to return my phone or email messages. Instead of allowing her to have the final say over my life, I contacted her supervisor after 48 hours passed without a response from her. They called a surprise meeting between the HPRP Housing Locator, two Case Managers, and I where they insisted they would help me *if* I moved to an apartment they chose for me in East Providence. I respectfully declined citing that I was already established in Newport and had several community commitments on the Newport County Reentry Council, Social Action Committee of a local church, and as a fundraiser for the McKinney shelter. I also told them that spiritually Newport was my home. They transferred my case to the HPRP administrators in Middletown. A shelter roommate who has fallen under this spell of helplessness and non-responsiveness by the Housing Locator still resides in the shelter.

Just like Dr. King, God has called me to fight the discriminatory practices and abuses levied against the homeless as an oppressed minority of our community. As a solution, the homeless "must unite for political action to compel the majority to listen," to quote Dr. King. The day after the General Body meeting, I awoke with God's vision for the Community Education proposal which follows. Although the jail cells have been replaced by check boxes of inferiority and billy clubs replaced by psychological beatings, the fight to free the voiceless and the powerless in our community remains the same. I have committed to God and commit to the NAACP to lead and finish this fight.

Very respectfully,

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.
Founder-International Freedom Coalition
Direct: 401.808.3075
Email: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

Community Education Proposal | 1/24/2011

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Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Sapphire Jule King

From: Dwayne Keys [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 7:45 PM
To: Sapphire King
Cc: James Vincent
Subject: Re: Community Education Proposal

Hello Sapphire,

Thank you so much for submitting this proposal. The content is truly enlightening and does speak to the economic justice component of our Civil Rights Movement. Please know that Jim received this attachment, in which we will review in the near future as we are definitely receiving an abundance of inquiries to the branch.

-Dwayne

"There are no secrets to success: don't waste time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, and learning from failure" - Colin Powell

From: Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>
To: James Vincent [REDACTED]
Cc: Dwayne Keys [REDACTED]; mcoleman@strongfamiliesnow.org
Sent: Mon, January 24, 2011 2:46:26 PM
Subject: Community Education Proposal

Hi Jim,

The morning after attending the NAACP meeting, I awoke with an awesome vision from God dancing around in my mind. The enormity and significance of it actually gave me a headache! I have captured it in the attached Community Education Proposal to lead homeless men and women in a new civil rights movement to legally redress their oppression and maltreatment.

I look forward to becoming an active member of the NAACP and supporting the new direction you envision.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd

Child & Family Advocate

Call: 401.808.3075

Click: 

Appendix I: HPRP Denial Letter

Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

██████████, ██████████ RI, ██████████
401-██████████ / Fax 401-██████████

January 26, 2011

REF: HPRP Services

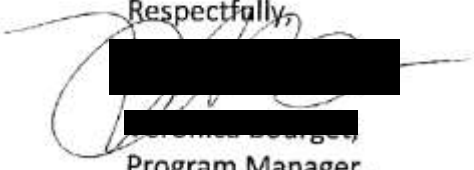
Dear Ms King,

HPRP is a program to assist individuals and families in becoming self-sustainable in their homes through the Federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program. As such, goals for sustainable living are determined by the client with the assistance of the HPRP staff. At this time, you have determined that you need financial assistance to become rapidly re-housed in a market rental unit. You have also determined that you are not willing to participate in an affordable housing search with HPRP.

The HPRP program has determined that you are eligible for the following services: case management, housing search assistance, financial literacy education. HPRP will be able to provide you with a larger array of services should your income or employment situation change. Additional services will also become available to you if you determine that you are willing to explore a larger array of affordable housing options.

I look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,


██████████
██████████
Program Manager,
HPRP

HPRP is a collaboration of ██████████

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix J: HPRP Complaint Letter

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

270 Bellevue Ave. PMB205

Newport, RI 02840

Phone: (401) 808-3075

Email: safiraking@gmail.com

February 4, 2011

Ms. Caitlin Frumerie
Office of Housing and Community Development
One Capitol Hill – Third Floor
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Ms. Frumerie,

Please accept this letter as an official complaint against the HPRP administrative teams at [REDACTED] in Providence and [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. As the Founder of the nonprofit corporation International Freedom Coalition and its subsidiary Shalom Healing Homes, I have served families in the community facing economic, spiritual, and emotional challenges for 10 years. Currently, I advocate for human and children's rights.

In 2008, I moved into my mother's home and in November 2009 earned my Master's degree in Adult Education and Training. My studies led me to found the Coalition and pour what little resources I had left into its launch. Needless to say, the economy was by then at its lowest. I was unable to find employment; my leadership of the Coalition is strictly voluntary. When my 63 year-old mother retired in October 2010 and her income drastically reduced, she was no longer able to support the extra financial burden my presence placed on her budget. Thus, I had to move to ease her stress. I became homeless.

My experience at [REDACTED] coupled with my background as a community advocate prompted me to draft a Bill of Rights for the Homeless which has been introduced to Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Newport), through community connections that I made in Newport, and has gained the attention of Rep. Peter Martin (D-Newport). Additionally, I was offered the opportunity to move into transitional housing at 50 Washington Square in Newport—to be relieved of the ill-treatment other residents and I faced. Further, I was offered a seat on the Newport County Reentry Council charged with resolving the challenges that ex-offenders and the homeless must overcome. Subsequently, I moved from [REDACTED] on December 8, 2010. Subsequently, I have become a member of the Social Action Committee at a local Newport church and started networking with local business leaders to support the fundraising efforts of the McKinney Cooperative Shelter. Essentially, I have become established and have been accepted as a contributing member of the Newport community.

One week before Christmas, a First Step roommate delivered a message to me by phone to contact [REDACTED] HPRP Case Manager at [REDACTED] at her request. I met with Ms. [REDACTED] on December 27, 2010. She explained that HPRP required participants to be employed in order to receive assistance. However, "over the past month" her director instructed her to extend help to individuals who were verifiably trying hard to gain employment and exit homelessness. Ms. [REDACTED] said she thought of me because she knew I was in Vocational Services everyday actively searching and submitting resumes. She clearly explained that even though I was not currently employed, they could and would help me.

Ms. [REDACTED] also explained that if I could even find a part-time opportunity, they would continue to cover my rent to allow me to substantially pay down my \$6000 credit card debt. Needless to say, I became excited and hopeful. I had seen many part-time instructor positions but never applied because I knew I wouldn't be able to sustain myself on half a salary. However, Ms. [REDACTED] was now offering me an opportunity to obtain part-time work to "get my foot in the door", as [REDACTED] of Vocational Services encouraged me to do when she learned of my chance to participate in the program. I thought this could give me time to at least find two part-time instructor positions which normally earn \$20-25 an hour and be near a normal, full salary for my educational and professional background. Perfect.

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Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

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In that initial intake meeting, I explained to Ms. [REDACTED] that I had become established in Newport and advised her of my many commitments to organizations here. She assured me that I could find housing in Newport as the program is statewide. No problem. Ms. [REDACTED] said that I could either select from their list of apartments or find an apartment on my own. She also explained that the rent needed to be in a range that I could reasonably sustain on my own after I leave the program. "For some people that's \$600 per month. For others, it's \$900," she said. I repeated the requirements as I understood them:

- ✓ Must attend the budgeting class.
- ✓ Agree to monthly case management.
- ✓ Current employment not necessary but must be actively seeking and show proof.
- ✓ With part-time employment, I would continue to receive help but be required to substantially pay down my credit card debt and show proof every month.
- ✓ I could remain in Newport to meet my community obligations and continue to make connections that could possibly lead to employment.
- ✓ I could select my own apartment in a rental range that I could reasonably sustain after leaving the program.
- ✓ I could receive rent/utility payments for up to 18 months as long as my salary was <\$25,600.

Ms. [REDACTED] agreed that these were indeed the requirements I must meet, and we proceeded with the intake. I attended the required budgeting class on January 3, 2011 and met with [REDACTED], HPRP Housing Locator, on January 5, 2011. No one asked if I had completed a budget in the class, asked to see a completed budget, or discussed my personal, sustainable rental amount. Ms. [REDACTED] confirmed my need to remain in Newport and asked if I had found apartments as she had none on her list. I told her I had been looking. She called a rental agent in Newport and scheduled an appointment for the following day January 6, 2011 at 12:00 p.m.

Ten minutes prior to the appointment, Ms. [REDACTED] called my cell and the rental agent from her cell to advise us that she would be arriving 10 minutes late, meaning she should have been only 20 minutes away. I arrived at the rental office at 11:59 a.m. Ms. [REDACTED] arrived at 1:00 p.m. —one hour and ten minutes after her cell phone call—with her young adult daughter. [REDACTED] explained to the agent that I would be participating in HPRP which was guaranteed to pay my rent on time every month or subsidize a portion of the rent as I began working. Ms. [REDACTED] also went into partial details about my case management plan. The agents immediately crossed off several apartments from their prepared list stating they knew those landlords would not participate in any kind of subsidized or public housing. Unfortunately, the apartments we were shown in a rental range of \$750-\$950 (the lowest rents in Newport) were not the cleaner units they had listed on their website within the same \$825-875 range. No doubt, these were the ones crossed off the list.

The next day, Friday January 7, 2011, I found an apartment on my own. I simply explained that I had received a grant to cover my housing expenses. The agent saw no problem with that. I completed their required rental application with the requested personal information. After leaving the agent's office, I left a message on Ms. [REDACTED]'s cell phone at approximately 1 p.m. advising her of the apartment, the application, and the agent's phone number to schedule the inspection. Ms. [REDACTED] did not return my phone call or call the agent. On Saturday January 8, I sent Ms. [REDACTED] an email message stating that my rental application had been approved by the landlord, and they were awaiting her call to schedule the inspection and proceed forward.

I called Ms. [REDACTED] on Monday January 10th at 10 a.m. on her office line and left her a follow-up message about the apartment, my phone message on Friday, and my email to her on Saturday. She never returned my call. However, at 12:50 p.m. and at 1:07 p.m. that same day, she emailed me organizations to contact about education jobs and information about a job fair. Yet, she never acknowledged any of my messages about the apartment I found. At 3:43 p.m., the rental agent called me to ask if I had spoken with Ms. [REDACTED] because she had not called to schedule the inspection. The agent said that she explained my professional background to the owners and they really liked me as a "perfect fit" for the building. She also explained the importance of hearing from Ms. [REDACTED] since the apartment had already been reduced from \$950 to \$900, was therefore a good deal for the area, and I could lose out on the opportunity.

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I immediately sent Ms. [REDACTED] another email addressing the issue along with my growing concern over her non-responsiveness to my messages. I cc'd Ms. [REDACTED] on the email and attached a copy of my budget (which no one had yet requested to see) to illustrate that this apartment would easily be sustainable with a \$15/hr job and would save me \$100 per month over projected utility costs. Thus, it would be sustainable with a \$14/hr job, one-half of my immediate earning potential. Bear in mind, that I have had two interviews for positions in this salary range, but the employers frankly stated that while my resume and interview were impressive, I was overqualified. Thus, I am essentially being forced to wait for a position which will earn much more than this calculated minimum. All referenced email communications are enclosed. My budget using the worksheet given in the Budgeting for a Better Future class is as follows:

Budget Worksheet: Sapphire Jule King

Expenses	Budgeted Amount	
	Conservative Minimum	Target Minimum
FIXED EXPENSES		
Rent/mortgage (max)	\$ 900	\$ 900
Insurance	0	0
Auto payments	0	0
Student Loan Payments	\$ 250	\$ 250
Child/Elder Care	0	0
Credit card installments	\$ 151	\$ 151
Other: Cell phone*	\$ 55.01	\$ 55.01
VARIABLE EXPENSES		
Groceries	\$ 200	\$ 200
Utilities (heat, elec, H ₂ O, internet)	\$ 200	\$ 200
Transportation	\$ 62	\$ 62
Medical or dental	\$ 25	\$ 25
Clothing	\$ 100	\$ 200
Personal Hygiene/Hair-Nail care	\$ 30	\$ 100
Entertainment	\$ 40	\$ 100
Other: Mom	0	\$ 150
SAVINGS		
Savings amount (5-10%)	\$ 100	\$ 200
Total Expenses and savings	\$ 2,113	\$ 2,593
Salary Required to Sustain Budget**		
Min. Hourly Wage	\$ 15.24	\$ 18.70
Min. Gross Salary (mo)	\$ 2,641	\$ 3,241
Min. Gross Salary (yr)	\$ 31,695	\$ 38,895

*Reduced by \$5 in March and every 6 months after

**Using Wage Conversions worksheet by Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

The HPRP Financial Management Webinar defines "reasonable" costs as "recognized as ordinary and necessary". A rental rate of \$900 *without* any utilities included is ordinary, among the cheapest for Newport, and sustainable by me in the future. This particular apartment includes in that rate water and internet access—a valuable, necessary resource which would allow me to job search 24 hours per day even when the library is closed due to the weather or holidays, be able to apply for positions quicker, apply for an ever-increasing online instructor opportunity, and possibly increase my chances of gaining employment sooner.

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The next morning, Tuesday January 11th at approximately 9:10 a.m., I called [REDACTED] Vice President of Adult Services and HPRP supervisor. I explained the events and my growing concerns as described above and asked if someone other than Ms. [REDACTED] could inspect the apartment. Ms. [REDACTED] told me that I could not live in Newport although I assured her that Ms. [REDACTED] clearly stated that I could. She said that Ms. [REDACTED] was the only person who could inspect the apartment and promised to discuss the matter with her. Approximately one hour later, Ms. [REDACTED] finally called me directly and said that she was transferring my case to [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. Ms. [REDACTED] obviously did not hold Ms. [REDACTED] accountable for her unprofessional treatment of my case. Her solution was to shove me along to the next agency instead of to uphold their end of the agreement. Later that morning, Ms. [REDACTED] responded to my Monday afternoon email but never acknowledged my previous messages or email about the apartment specifically. Now, my reputation and reliability in the eyes of the rental agent and property owner are in question.

Upon further investigation, you will find that my case is not unique. I can refer you to at least one additional individual who is working part-time, is not receiving responses from Ms. [REDACTED] when she locates an apartment that is not situated in a questionable neighborhood, who is having Ms. [REDACTED] cancel their appointments, and who is unfortunately still living at [REDACTED] when she could be in her own place.

On Thursday January 13th, I had a meeting scheduled with Ms. [REDACTED] to sign the release form to transfer my case. Instead, and unbeknownst to me until I arrived, they planned a meeting between Ms. [REDACTED], Ms. [REDACTED], Ms. [REDACTED], and me to come to a consensus on how to best meet my needs. Ms. [REDACTED] said that the issue was with my earning potential given my educational attainment, professional experience, and rental amount that I would be able to sustain. Without directly referencing or conducting a line-item discussion of my budget, Ms. [REDACTED] stated that while I might be able to earn the minimum salary needed to maintain that rent, I did not have that job *right now*. She also asked what would happen if I moved into the apartment and *six months from now*, I still did not have a job? Ms. [REDACTED] added that Newport was too expensive, and I should consider moving to East Providence or Riverside. I reiterated that I have established obligations in Newport which I have committed to and will be held accountable for and moving away would place a burden on me since I have no money for transportation. They all continued to tell me that they would place me in an apartment, but not in Newport. Anywhere else but Newport. I declined, citing my firm commitment to meet my established community obligations here and my staunch dedication to being a reliable professional who follows through on those commitments with integrity. They then transferred my case to [REDACTED].

On January 18, 2011, I met with [REDACTED] HPRP Program Manager in [REDACTED]. We reviewed my paperwork originally created at [REDACTED] and completed some additional information. I had my prepared budget on the table, but she did not ask to review it. I asked Ms. [REDACTED] if I could participate even though I was not employed. She answered yes and stated that my case would have to be recertified in three months. I asked Ms. [REDACTED] for her definition of "reasonable rent", and she responded no more than \$1000 plus utilities. I told her of the apartment I found for \$900 with internet included and how helpful it would be in my job search. She said that she did not see a problem with that. Ms. [REDACTED] suggested that I have the rental agent contact her directly so that she could arrange for the proper documentation from the landlord and schedule the inspection. I called the rental agent after our meeting, and the rental agent called Ms. [REDACTED].

The next morning on January 19, 2011, Ms. [REDACTED] called me and said that she had received the message from the rental agent. However, she needed me to apply for the various housing lists in Newport and email her proof of my job search to date. I created a job log and emailed Ms. [REDACTED] the communications I still had concerning positions for which I had applied. Also, in the email, I requested permission to *not* be required to apply for housing as a condition of my participation in the HPRP program citing my spiritual/religious beliefs and the well-researched theory of self-expectancy. Ms. [REDACTED]'s initial email response stated, "It appears you are satisfied with your living arrangements [sic] at this time..." and suggested that Federal and State guidelines required the housing applications. Two minutes later, she sent another email with her "living arrangements" statement removed. However, her formal letter dated January 26, 2011 which denied my placement in a fair market rental unit made no such reference to Federal or State requirements as the basis of her decision. Instead, she simply stated that she could help me if I was employed or applied for housing. She also never communicated with the rental agent after receiving all previously requested information. Copies of all communications are also attached.

In summary, my ultimate participation in HPRP through [REDACTED] was suddenly subject to requirements different from those initially stated and affirmed. Instead of being placed in an apartment of my choosing, in

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any area within the state of Rhode Island, with a rent that I could reasonably sustain after leaving the program, and receive assistance for up to 18 months while possibly working part-time until I could gain full-time employment, I was now being forced to accept an apartment two hours away from my professional community commitments and required to be employed full-time in six months. My hard work to make connections with decision-makers and social service leaders in the Newport community, which could very well lead to an employment opportunity, was not honored. Instead, they asked me to essentially turn my back on my commitments much like they have turned their backs on my situation. Instead of working with me and focusing on my personal strengths as advised in the HPRP Case Management document, they worked against me.

Likewise, my ultimate participation in HPRP through [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] is suddenly subject to requirements different from those initially stated and affirmed. Instead of being placed in an apartment of my choosing within her predefined "reasonable rent", I am now being required to apply to live in a housing complex or be employed first.

The *HPRP Beyond the Basics* Webinar states that administrators should "be clear about what HPRP can do & what it cannot do—with staff and participants." The presentation also states that "demonstration that applicant has or will have income is *not* a HUD requirement." Ergo, I am requesting to receive a written description of the Federal and State HPRP requirements which answers the following questions:

1. What are the Federal requirements for participation in HPRP?
2. What are the State requirements for participation in HPRP?
3. How is "reasonable rent" determined? Who makes this determination?
4. How is the rental amount a participant can reasonably sustain after leaving the program determined?
5. Are participants limited to apartments within a certain city or certain neighborhoods?
6. Are participants allowed to choose a fair market rental unit?
7. Does HPRP require participants to be placed in a unit on a housing list?
8. Must participants apply for subsidized housing in order to participate in HPRP?
9. What are the employment requirements for participating in HPRP?

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions or need any further information, please feel free to contact me by phone at (401) 808-3075.

Sincerely,

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.
Direct: (401) 808-3075
Email: safiraking@gmail.com

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

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ATTACHMENTS: CORRESPONDENCE

My Rental Application Approved by Landlord

Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Sat, Jan 8, 2011 at 5:41 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

Lindsay [REDACTED], the realtor showing the apartment, informed me that the landlord approved my rental application!

Property Details

Address: [REDACTED] Newport, RI 02840

Bed: 1, Bath: 1

Rent: \$900 includes water, cable, WIFI

Other utilities: gas heat, electric (typically run \$100/mo or less combined)

I told Lindsay about my professional background during the showing and simply stated that I was awarded a grant designated to cover my housing expenses. I also explained that the granting organization pays the rent directly to the landlord. On the rental application, I listed "grant for housing expenses, guaranteed & secured" in the space for current monthly income. Based upon the information I provided in their standard application, including the above reference for income, I was approved.

On their end, all they now need is the security deposit and first month's rent. No other explanations or information is required. If I am ever asked more about the grant, I will simply state that:

"I was awarded a grant created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help degreed professionals like me who have been downsized or hardest hit by the recession. The grant covers housing expenses for the duration of the year lease to allow me the opportunity to regain employment at a professional level."

Although the program is designed to help individuals from a variety of backgrounds, it seems it will be more effective to state its purpose in terms of my situation. We have seen what happens when they hear the common descriptors of "housing", "rental assistance", "subsidies", "subsidized", and the mention of meeting with me regularly to make sure all is on track. For them, these are buzz words which conjure the misguided, stereotypical images of trouble. All they want to know is what they ask on their rental application and that they will get paid. The administration details and stipulations as it pertains to my case management plan should remain between my case management team and me so as to not cause fear in the landlord.

I told her that on my end, the granting organization would need to inspect the apartment to be sure it passed their standards and was lead free/lead compliant. She is awaiting your call to schedule that inspection. When you do, can we meet at the property about 10 minutes before the scheduled time to go over a few more questions I had? She asked me some things that I did not know how to answer. I'd like to be properly prepared.

Thank you and I appreciate all of your help!

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd

Child & Family Advocate

Call: 401.808.3075

Click: [in](#) [f](#) [e](#)

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

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RE: S850 / 1br - Includes water and heat (Downtown Newport)

[REDACTED]
To: safiraking@gmail.com

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 12:50 PM

Good afternoon Sapphire,

Employment contacts:

Community College of RI DUI instructor- 401.455.6000

Providence School Department - (Joyce O'connor) 401.456.9222 say you were referred by Kenya Fullen

RI Dept of Corrections, GED Instructor - 401.462.1000

[REDACTED]
-----Original Message-----

From: safiraking@gmail.com [mailto:safiraking@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 06, 2011 9:41 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: S850 / 1br - Includes water and heat (Downtown Newport)

{email} has forwarded you this craigslist.org posting.

Please see below for more information.

Visit the posting at <http://providence.craigslist.org/apa/2142811669.html> to contact the person who posted this.

Includes water and heat

Date: 2011-01-04, 8:39AM

Great first floor apartment. Located within walking distance to shopping, restaurants and Salve.

Hardwood floors, fresh paint, new windows, built ins, good size kitchen with entry way. Plenty of closet space in bedroom.

Back yard, front porch, on site washer and dryer.

No pets, year lease. Unfurnished.

Call for a showing 401-835-7337

Statewide Job Fair

[REDACTED]
To: safiraking@gmail.com

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 1:07 PM

Hi Sapphire,

There is a statewide job fair this coming Thursday 1/13/2011 from 10am to 3pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick (801 Greenwich Ave Warwick, RI 02886)

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

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URGENT: Landlord awaiting your response

Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 4:10 PM

To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Hello [REDACTED]

I just received a follow-up call at 3:43 p.m. from Lindsay [REDACTED] the apartment agent, asking if I'd spoken with you because she hadn't received a call to set up the inspection. She expressed how important it is to move forward in a timely manner so that I would not lose the apartment. They have graciously placed the apartment on a courtesy hold pending a timely response. Again, here is her information:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Real Estate
[REDACTED]
Newport, RI 02840
c: [REDACTED]
f: [REDACTED]

Property Details
Address: [REDACTED] Newport, RI 02840
Bed: 1, Bath: 1
Rent: \$900 includes water, cable, WIFI
Other utilities: gas heat, electric (typically run \$100/mo or less combined)

I have attached a copy of my budget that I prepared after attending the required Budgeting for a Better Future class. You will see that the utilities included in this apartment will actually save me \$100 per month! Also, my immediate earning potential -- given my education, professional background, and employers' admitted refusal to hire me for a \$15/hr job because I am "over qualified" -- will easily sustain the prepared budget.

After your 1 hour late arrival for our scheduled appointment with the first agent and your delayed response to my phone and email messages regarding this apartment, I am growing a little concerned that my approval to participate in this program and my housing situation is not receiving the professional consideration that it warrants.

I do understand that your client caseload must be heavy. I would just like to be able to go home.

I look forward to seeing you at the apartment inspection.

Warmest regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
Child & Family Advocate
Call: 401.808.3075
Click: [in](#) [f](#) [✉](#)

Thank you

Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 10, 2011 at 4:19 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

Yes, Thursday at 3pm works!

Is [REDACTED] in the office today? She has not responded to my messages that I left Friday afternoon, Saturday (email), and this morning. I have found an apartment and my rental application has been approved by the

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landlord. They are just waiting for [REDACTED] to schedule the inspection and move forward.

The rental agent just phoned me because she hasn't received a call from [REDACTED]. She arrived one hour late to an appointment with another rental agent which caused them to scratch the decent apartments from our viewing list. As such, I am afraid the delayed communication with this agent will reflect badly on the landlord's acceptance of the program for fear of not receiving the rent in a timely manner. This is frustrating.

I really do appreciate all of your help and timely attention to my case.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd

Child & Family Advocate

Call: 401.808.3075

Click:   

RE: URGENT: Landlord awaiting your response

[REDACTED] > Tue, Jan 11, 2011 at 3:46 PM
To: Sapphire King <safraking@gmail.com>
Cc: [REDACTED]

Hello Sapphire,

I am just receiving this email, Tuesday, January 11, 2011 @ 3:28pm. It is extremely disheartening to have received an email as such. I have gone above and beyond to assist you in not only locating a home but also in your job search. There is a process that we must adhere to, unfortunately you are not my only client, I am also working to find housing for 20 other clients simultaneously. Going forward you will be assisted by the HPRP staff at [REDACTED] which is located in [REDACTED], RI. Once you have signed a release with the HPRP staff of [REDACTED] your file will be forwarded. [REDACTED], (401) [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] will assist you.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Requested Job Search Log/Emails

Sapphire King <safraking@gmail.com>
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Wed, Jan 19, 2011 at 2:39 PM

Hello [REDACTED]

I am only cc'ing [REDACTED] just in case this is not your correct email address. I looked at the structure of the other addresses and made an educated guess at yours.

As requested, I have created a log detailing most of my resume submission, networking, and volunteer activities and have attached copies of any related email communications. However, there are additional positions for which I have applied that do not appear in this log. Once I received confirmation that they selected another candidate, I deleted the record from my inbox. With Gmail, all items in trash are automatically deleted after 30 days. I appreciate the additional job leads that both you and [REDACTED] have provided. I have already or will be following up on

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those leads. Please note that I do conduct a daily, online job search (when library is open) on various sites although these general search activities are not documented in the log.

I can also understand your position when you ask me to apply for the various housing lists. I know you only have my best interests in mind and want to ensure that I enter permanent housing. As a result of the spiritual growth and mindset transformation that I've experienced over the last 10 years to completely heal from alcoholism, depression, past traumas, and a general dissatisfaction with life, I now live according to certain spiritual principles which have repeatedly led me to success. The first is the self-expectancy theory which proves that we live up to our own expectations, however high or low we set them. Thus, I am a firm believer in "what you think about, you bring about", i.e. our thoughts guide our actions. As such, "backup" or "fall-back" plans are not a part of my mental makeup. I only set progressive goals. I look forward, not back. I look up, not down. In this way, I set high expectations for myself and naturally take action that will lead me to fulfill those expectations. Second, and most important, I am guided by a Higher Power who I fearlessly believe will provide me with the fortitude, energy, and illuminated path to meet those expectations.

Ergo, I am requesting that I be allowed to participate in the HPRP program *and* maintain this self-determining, spiritual formula which keeps my drive alive, keeps me pushing everyday, keeps me seeking creative ways to meet decision-makers, nurtures my faith, and leads me to success. Following this formula, I have gone from a private hotel room, to a women's dorm in [REDACTED] to a private room at [REDACTED] to now my own apartment in only 2.5 months. Each step I took was a progressive step forward fueled by fervent action. Please permit me to keep this forward momentum by not requiring me to apply for housing which plants a destructive "fall-back" seed into my subconscious mind.

What I think about, I bring about. My actions since arriving in Rhode Island have proven that. Allow me to maintain the spiritual mindset I need to exit the HPRP program on my own two feet. I **will be** self-sustaining well before the end of a 12-month lease. I strongly believe that I **will** exit the program on my own two feet by the 3-month recertification.

Please let me know if you should require any additional information.

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd

Child & Family Advocate

Call: 401.808.3075

Click:   

Thu, Jan 20, 2011 at 7:53 AM

To: safiraking@gmail.com

Cc: [REDACTED]

Hello Sapphire,

It appears you are satisfied with your living arrangements at this time & have reached a small part of your spiritual goal per your statements below. With that being said your request to not obtain housing applications will be reviewed. I will get back to you soon and I'm asking you to please remember that HPRP is funded by the Fed. Govt. & the State of RI and there are guidelines to follow.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]
Program Mgr.
HPRP, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Thu, Jan 20, 2011 at 7:55 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: safiraking@gmail.com

Hello Sapphire,

Your request to "not" obtain housing applications will be reviewed and I will get back to you with a determination on HPRP assiting you. Please remember that HPRP is funded by the Fed. Govt. & the State of RI there are guidelines we must follow.

[REDACTED]
Program Mgr.
HPRP, [REDACTED]

safiraking@gmail.com <safiraking@gmail.com> Fri, Jan 21, 2011 at 9:27 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Good morning [REDACTED]

I am inquiring about the outcome of the review of my request.

I made more great contacts at another community meeting last night. There is a strong possibility of my taking on a leadership role within this national organization. Doing so will further increase my visibility within the community amongst decision-makers and greatly enhance my employment opportunities.

I look forward to receiving your favorable response and moving forward with the [REDACTED] apartment rental.

Sincerely,
Sapphire Jule King

[REDACTED] Mon, Jan 24, 2011 at 7:20 AM
To: safiraking@gmail.com
Cc: [REDACTED]

Will get back to you with in this week.

[REDACTED]
Program Mgr.
HPRP, [REDACTED]

Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 24, 2011 at 2:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Bcc: mdowney [REDACTED]

Hello [REDACTED]

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to receiving a favorable response.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
Child & Family Advocate
Call: 401.808.3075
Click:   

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Following up

safiraking@gmail.com <safiraking@gmail.com>
To: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Tue, Feb 1, 2011 at 7:42 AM

Hi Lindsay,

Have you spoken to [REDACTED] yet? I know she received your message.

Thanks,
Sapphire

[REDACTED]
To: "safiraking@gmail.com" <safiraking@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 1, 2011 at 7:49 AM

Food morning. I spoke with get and sent her all the info she needed two weeks ago bit have not heard back. How are you?!

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Real Estate
[REDACTED]
Newport, RI 02840
[REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix K: HPRP Complaint Response



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Administration
OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

Sapphire King M.A.Ed.
270 Bellevue Ave. PMB205
Newport, RI 02840

February 17th, 2011

Dear Sapphire King,

We have answered the following questions in response the letter you submitted to our office on February 4th, 2011:

1. What are the federal requirements for participation in HPRP?

The federal requirements for the HPRP program can be found in HUD's Notice of Funding for HPRP and in subsequent guidance posted on their website. These materials can be found online at: <http://www.hudhre.info/HPRP/index.cfm?do=viewHPRPIssuances> and <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewFaqsByTopic&topicid=102#byTpc>.

To summarize, HPRP is intended to serve those persons who are currently homeless or would be homeless but for this assistance to gain permanent housing through social services and financial assistance (as necessary). In order to participate in HPRP, HUD requires:

- *The household must meet with a authorized representative who can determine the appropriate type of assistance to meet their needs*
- *The household must be at or below 50 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).*
- *The household must be either homeless or at risk of losing its housing and meet both of the following circumstances:*
 - i. No appropriate subsequent housing options have been identified;*
 - AND*
 - ii. The household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain immediate housing or remain in its existing housing.*

HUD has additional regulations that apply to each assistance category. For a list of this guidance, please refer to the links referenced above.

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2. What are the state requirements for participation in HPRP?

The state requirements for the HPRP program can be found on the Office of Housing and Community Development's website: <http://www.hrc.ri.gov/HPRP.php> and <http://www.hrc.ri.gov/HPRP-Pro.php>.

The State of Rhode Island is in compliance with all federal regulations for HPRP and has included additional policies and procedures consistent with state regulations and program goals.

The State of Rhode Island requires that clients participate in ongoing case management and financial counseling. While not all clients who are accepted into HPRP will receive financial assistance, those who do should be able to sustain their housing once HPRP assistance ends.

While income is not required to receive financial assistance, clients must demonstrate that they have a prospective income or means of support (pending SSI application, pending unemployment, pending child support, pending subsidized housing application, etc). Due to the lack of HPRP resources in comparison to the overwhelming volume of need in Rhode Island, most clients who receive financial assistance under HPRP will only receive 1-3 months of rental assistance after which they will transition to supporting their own housing costs (with the guidance of their case manager and financial counselor).

3. How is reasonable rent determined? Who makes this determination?

Rent reasonableness refers to a fiscal purchasing policy issued by HUD to ensure that any rental assistance paid does not exceed the actual rental cost for the unit. A rent is considered reasonable if it compares with other rents being charged during the same time period for comparable units in the private unassisted market. This policy is not to be confused with determining client sustainability and what rental costs a client can support.

4. How is the rental amount a participant can reasonably sustain after leaving the program determined?

The client and HPRP staff person work together to create a budget and review spending patterns and income to determine what rental costs the client can support once the program ends.

5. Are participants limited to apartments in a certain city or neighborhood?

Clients are not limited to apartments in certain regions; however relocating to different community may place the client in a different agency's catchment area and the client may be transferred or instructed to apply with the agency that serves that particular community.

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6. Are participants allowed to choose a fair market rental unit?

Clients may choose whatever type of housing is most appropriate for them. However, if the unit is to receive HPRP financial assistance the unit must have a lease and pass habitability/lead inspections. The unit can be fair market or subsidized, however HPRP cannot support the same cost type and period of another subsidy program (cannot pay rent if already receiving rental assistance for that month). Additionally, the cost of the unit must meet rent reasonable standards and be sustainable for the client once HPRP assistance ends.

7. Does HPRP require participants to be placed in a unit on a housing list?

HPRP does not require clients to apply for subsidized housing; however clients must be able to sustain their housing once assistance ends, and in many cases subsidized housing is a valuable resource to ensure sustainability.

In assessing client eligibility for specific types of HPRP assistance, case managers may consider an applicant's participation in job training programs, GED courses and/or prospective access to public housing/benefits. Such participation may be necessary to comply with program policies and procedures for eligibility.

8. Must participants apply for subsidized housing in order to participate in HPRP?

See response above.

9. What are the employment requirements for participating in HPRP?

While income is not required to receive financial assistance, clients must demonstrate that they have a prospective income or means of support (pending SSI application, pending unemployment, pending child support, pending subsidized housing application, etc) to illustrate that they can sustain their housing once assistance ends.

I hope that the information above answers your questions and if you should have any additional concerns, you can respond in writing to:

*Caitlin Frumerie, Office of Housing and Community Development,
One Capitol Hill, 3RD Flr, Providence, RI 02906*

Sincerely,



Caitlin Frumerie
HPRP Coordinator

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix L: Response from RI Commission for Human Rights



Sapphire King <safraking@gmail.com>

Proposed legislation

1 message

Cynthia Hiatt <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Apr 25, 2011 at 2:45 PM

To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

Cc: Francis Gaschen <[REDACTED]>, Michael Evora <[REDACTED]>

Dear Ms. King:

The Commissioners reviewed your proposed legislation again at their last meeting in March. They share your concern about potential discrimination on the basis of housing status.

The legislation you propose is very broad and covers a number of different areas. The Commission is able to comment only on the sections that relate to laws that it already enforces (the Fair Employment Practices Act, the Fair Housing Practices Act and the Hotels and Public Places Act). The Commission wants to consider the effects of those sections before deciding whether to formally support those portions. Among other things, with the General Assembly's goal of reducing the state budget, this may be a bad time to add additional responsibilities without having more staff. In addition, the Commission will be looking for comment from other members of the community.

I hope you wouldn't mind a few suggestions. In general, the Commission experience has been that it is very difficult to convince the General Assembly to pass legislation that covers a wide range of areas. Among other things, it is more difficult to address the concerns of those in opposition when their concerns will cover so many different areas. It might be better to break the proposed legislation down into a number of different bills.

Another difficulty that you have is timing. Usually, legislators will introduce new legislation this late in the session only when it is an urgent matter or something that has been studied for a while. You might want to prepare for obtaining a sponsor for your legislation for next year.

Thank you for your initiative.

Cynthia M. Hiatt
RI Commission For Human Rights
180 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
[\(401\) 222-7562](tel:4012227562)

Please note that my email address has been changed to [REDACTED]

This e-mail message contains confidential and/or legally privileged information belonging to the sender and intended only for the review and use of the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, dissemination, distribution, copying, review or use of the information contained in this e-mail message or any attachment is strictly prohibited. If you think that you have received this e-mail message in error, please notify me at [\(401\) 222-7562](tel:4012227562) and purge this e-mail message from your computer system immediately.
Thank you.

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

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Appendix M: Invite to Sen. Tassoni for Human Rights Commission Meeting



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Invitation to RI Human Rights Commission meeting regarding Bill of Rights for the Homeless

Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>

Thu, Feb 24, 2011 at 12:09 PM

Reply-To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

To: sen-tassoni@rilin.state.ri.us, john@[REDACTED]

Bcc: [REDACTED]@yahoo.com, mcoleman@strongfamiliesnow.org, [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Dear Senator Tassoni,

I am a person experiencing homelessness and the newest member of the Social Action Committee of Channing Memorial Church in Newport. During our community forum on homelessness and housing last night, Don Boucher of Housing First Rhode Island mentioned several times the sincere passion you have for the humane treatment of people experiencing homelessness.

Thus, I wanted to invite you to the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights meeting being held tomorrow at noon. I will be sharing my experiences of discrimination, abuse, harassment, and bullying by shelter staff and private agencies and asking for the Commission's official endorsement of the Bill of Rights for the Homeless that I have written as a result. Additional details of my story may be read at www.walkaweekinyourshoes.com.

This 25-point Bill of Rights is a combination of language from the [Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act \(HB4116\)](#) passed by the House of Representatives in Illinois in 2004; Rhode Island's Civil Rights Act of 1990, Civil Rights of People with Disabilities Act, Patient Protection Act, Patient Safety Act of 2008, Domestic Abuse Prevention Act, and Workplace Violence Prevention Act; and my own language based upon my experiences and observations. The bill also amends the Rhode Island State Fair Employment Practices Act, Harassment at Institutions of Higher Education, Hotels and Public Places, and the Rhode Island Fair Housing Practices Act of the penal law to include "housing status" as a defining category in groups legally recognized as protected under anti-discrimination law.

An abbreviated version and the full version of the bill are attached.

In addition to setting precedence in this nation, this legislation will certainly play a key role in creating a long-term solution for transitioning people experiencing homelessness towards self-sustainability in less time and at a significant cost savings to taxpayers, donors, private and public agencies, and all levels of government.

In November of last year, the bill was forwarded to Senator Paiva Weed via Bud Cicilline. Her office did respond and indicated that the bill needed a sponsor in order to be formally introduced. Speaking on behalf of the thousands of Rhode Islanders currently experiencing homelessness, those thousands at-risk of becoming homeless, and the millions nationwide who would benefit from this next right step in protecting vulnerable families, we would be honored if you would review and sponsor this bill.

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Please feel free to contact me directly should you have any questions or require additional information. I hope to meet you personally at the Commission meeting tomorrow.

Sincerely,


Sapphire Jule King, MAEd


Child & Family Advocate

Call: [401.808.3075](tel:401.808.3075)

Click:   

2 attachments

 **Homeless-Bill-of-Rights-short.pdf**
152K

 **Homeless-Bill-of-Rights-full.pdf**
195K

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix N: RSVP for Civil Rights Roundtable with Mayor Taveras



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

RSVP: Agenda & Flyer for meeting 3-24-11 of Roundtable with Mayor

1 message

Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>

Mon, Mar 21, 2011 at 2:09 PM

Reply-To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

To: mevora@[REDACTED]

Cc: ricj@ricj.org

Hello Michael,

I will be attending the RI Civil Rights Roundtable this Thursday morning. As we discussed at the February Commission meeting, our priority civil rights issue is passing a Bill or Rights for the Homeless to insure equal protection for people experiencing homelessness. A brief description follows.

New Civil Rights Movement: Equal Treatment for the Homeless

BILL SUMMARY

Establishes the Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act which designates "housing status" as a prohibited ground of discrimination, abuse, and harassment.

PURPOSE OR GENERAL IDEA OF BILL

This bill would develop a consumer-centered system of human rights-based principles and practices to insure that educational, employment, housing, and service programs are free from either conscious or inadvertent bias, discrimination, abuse, and harassment often levied against homeless individuals and families at shelters, meal sites, public and private agencies, on the street, and in any other places where homeless individuals may be found.

STATEMENT OF NEED

People experiencing homelessness are amongst our nation's most vulnerable citizens. Many present with sensitive issues such as mental illness, addictions, disabilities, domestic violence, and low educational attainment. Having such characteristics creates a vulnerable population within a vulnerable population who should be treated and served with the respect and care automatically afforded to other members of our community. Unfortunately, my personal experiences and professional observations in the shelter prove that this subgroup of people are instead being subjected to the discriminatory treatment reminiscent of that suffered by Blacks, Hispanics, women, and LGBT citizens in the not too distant past. The solution is to establish legal protections and a protocol of fair treatment by enacting a Bill of Rights for the Homeless in all 50 of these United States of America.

Respectfully,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
International Freedom Coalition
Founder/Family Advocate
Call: 401.808.3075
Click: 

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix O: Civil Rights Roundtable Mayor Meeting Follow-up



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

REMINDER Roundtable this Thurs, April 28

1 message

Toby Ayers [REDACTED]
To: "Ayers, Dr Toby" <ricj@ricj.org>

Tue, Apr 26, 2011 at 12:37 PM

Just a reminder that the Civil Rights Roundtable meeting is THIS WEEK. Hope to see everyone Thursday!

Toby

RICJ

Forwarding earlier message: _____

Dear Friends of the Civil Rights Roundtable: Please join us for the next meeting:

Thursday April 28
8:30am to 10:00am
Urban League conference room
246 Prairie Ave, Providence (free parking!)

An agenda is below. We seek to : Build our organization -- follow up on the meeting with the Mayor -- follow up on issues Including what happened with the Racial Profiling bill (see attached!!!) -- where do we go from here? Call me with additions to the agenda below.

Thank you, it was great to see so many at the last meeting. We look forward to seeing you next week!

Toby

AGENDA 4/28/11

RI CIVIL RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE

- I. Welcome
- II. Structure: Roundtable and Committees: Seeking involvement.

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

1. Legislative Committee – prioritizes and organizes advocacy
2. Communications Committee – outreaches with community and media
(Help build Roundtable Facebook page)
3. Congressional Committee – outreaches with congressional delegation
4. Education Committee – organizes educational initiatives and MLK event
5. Membership Committee – builds constituency

III. Legislation and Policy Issues: How can we help each other – with support for bills or policy initiatives?

1. Racial Profiling Bill – Discuss outcome
2. Police training on “fair and impartial policing” in May
3. Follow up on meeting with Mayor
 - a. Minority & Women’s Business Enterprise Task Force established
 - b. Homeless Bill of Rights – Discuss
 - c. Other issues from that meeting for followup
4. Outreach to Governor’s office to invite to Roundtable meeting
5. Other issues

IV. Logistics

1. Meeting times (cannot conflict with Statehouse times);
2. Meeting location
3. Other issues raised – translation, childcare availability

V. Next meeting: May 26

Toby Ayers, PhD

Executive Director RICJ / Co-Facilitator, RI Civil Rights Roundtable

Rhode Island for Community & Justice

80 Washington St., Suite 436

Providence, RI 02903-1803

ricj@ricj.org www.ricj.org

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix P: Online Petition Social Media Campaign

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. The page header includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and the user's name, Sapphire Jule King. The page is set to the timeline for the year 2011. The main content area displays several posts:

- Training Opportunity: Housing 101: Legal Issues** (July 22, 2011): A post from conta.cc describing a training session on legal issues related to housing. It includes a "Like" button and 4 comments.
- International Freedom Coalition shared a link** (July 22, 2011): A post sharing a link to a petition site. The link text reads: "International Freedom Coalition is advocating for a Bill of Rights for the Homeless to put an end to abuses and discrimination. Sign and Share our online petition at: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/bill-of-rights-for-the-homeless/>". Below the link is a preview for "Bill of Rights for the Homeless - The Petition Site" with the text: "Save millions in taxpayer dollars. Protect the rights of 7.5 million unemployed professionals, foreclosed families". It includes a "Like" button and 4 comments.
- Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless shared a link** (July 13, 2011): A post shared via HousingWorks RI.
- Breakfast with an Expert** (July 15, 2011): A post from Rhode Island featuring a logo for "504 TEN" and text: "Join us for Breakfast with an Expert Meetings are held on Thursdays from 8 am to 9 am - July 7th to September 22nd 2011 at The Rhode Island Foundation, One Union Station, Providence Parking is". It includes a "Like" button and 4 comments.
- Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless** (July 15, 2011): A post with the text: "Many thanks to Linda Watkins for her work at Amos House as a partner in ending homelessness - best wishes from your Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless family!". It includes a "Like" button, 9 comments, and 1 share.
- Rhonda Taylor shared a link** (July 14, 2011): A post sharing a link to a news article. The link text reads: "http://hawaiinewsdaily.com/2011/07/outcasts-tonight-tens-of-thousands-of-formerly-middle-class-americans-will-be-sleeping-in-their-cars-in-tent-cities-or-on-the-streets/". Below the link is a preview for "Outcasts: Tonight Tens Of Thousands Of Formerly Middle Class Americans will be sleeping in their cars" with a small image of a man in a field.

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix Q: Bill Presentation and Formal Introduction in Senate



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

FW: Hearing for Homeless Bill of Rights Tuesday the 31st

Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>

Tue, Jan 31, 2012 at 8:18 AM

Reply-To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

To: Toby Ayers [REDACTED]

Hi Toby,

I am happy to read this news! It's great to know that some elements of the comprehensive [Bill of Rights for the Homeless](#) that International Freedom Coalition presented to Bud Cicilline in December 2010 and the RI Human Rights Commission, NAACP-Providence Chapter, Senator Tassoni, Representative Peter Martin, and Mayor Tavares at the March Roundtable last year are finally getting a hearing.

I applaud everyone's efforts and encourage you to push forward with the additional conditions in our proposed bill to protect individuals experiencing homelessness from intimidation, bullying, and psychological and emotional abuse at the hands of shelter staff.

You may also be interested in reading and sharing the [working paper](#) from the research study I conducted on the Operation First Step Program.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
International Freedom Coalition
Founder & President
Call: 401.324.WINR
Click:    

On Mon, Jan 30, 2012 at 5:58 PM, Toby Ayers <toby@eta.uri.edu> wrote:

Please see note from RI Coalition for the Homeless, **HEARING TUESDAY JAN 31 at 5:00pm**. This is one of the bills presented at the Roundtable's recent MLK Forum! Toby

From: Marty Cooper [mailto:MCooper@[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 12:27 PM
Subject: FW: Hearing for Homeless Bill of Rights tomorrow, Tuesday the 31st

The RI Coalition For the Homeless has asked that we spread the word that the Homeless Bill of Rights will be heard Tuesday, January 31 at 5:00. See the email below.

Please tell others.

Thanks

Marty

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix R: Formal Support Request to RI Civil Rights Roundtable



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Deadline for Roundtable legislative review forms is March 2

3 messages

Toby Ayers

Fri, Feb 24, 2012 at 2:25 PM

At our meeting yesterday, the Legislative Committee asked people to **please forward their LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FORM to [REDACTED]** for any bills you want the Roundtable to **support or oppose** this session.

The deadline is FRIDAY, MARCH 2nd to guarantee that your bill will come before the full Roundtable for its support.

During March, the legislative process will move very fast! So the Committee needs your information asap.

I attach the Legislative Tracking Sheet they will regularly update. As you can see, the Roundtable will support the following: Just Cause Right to Rent; Pay Day Loans; Racial Profiling Prevention; Auto Insurance Credit History; Larceny \$1500 to become Felony Offense; Ban the Box.

As of today, the Legislative Committee will review the following: RI Works. **They tabled two bills until they get the request forms: Homeless Bill of Rights; and Certificate of Rehabilitation. We do need those forms by March 2nd !**

If there are other bills you'd like the Legislative Committee to consider, send the form to Michael Evora, [REDACTED] Thank you! The Legislative Committee will meet March 5th to look over the requests they have received.

Finally, we want to say WELCOME to three who recently joined us: Anthony Robinson, policy analyst at the RI House; Maritza Perez, Community Relations at RI Dept of Human Services; and Jeff Gale, Program Coordinator at the International Institute. The Roundtable looks forward to your input!

Toby

Toby Ayers, PhD, Executive Director

Rhode Island for Community & Justice

80 Washington St, #436, Providence, RI 02903

401-467-1717 x102

ricj@ricj.org

www.ricj.org

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr.



<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=fc1777eceb&view=pt&cat=Coalition&search=cat&th=135b111...>

2/4

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

2 attachments

-  **FORM REQUESTING LEG SUPPORT 2012.doc**
29K
-  **LEGISLATIVE TRACKING SHEET feb 24 2012.pdf**
309K

Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>
Reply-To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org
To: [REDACTED]

Fri, Feb 24, 2012 at 4:27 PM

Hello Michael,

I am submitting the form requesting support for the Homeless Bill of Rights legislation. Although I am sure local advocates have done the same, I wanted to add my support. Also attached are both copies of the bill. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do.




On behalf of the millions of individuals experiencing homelessness around the country, International Freedom Coalition appreciates your efforts and unwillingness to let this die. Rhode Island is going to be the trendsetter on this issue.

Best regards,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
[International Freedom Coalition](#)
Founder & President
Call: 401.324.WINR
Click:    

[Quoted text hidden]

3 attachments

-  **IFC-FORM REQUESTING LEG SUPPORT 2012.pdf**
57K
-  **H7173.pdf**
33K
-  **S2052.pdf**
33K

Michael Evora [REDACTED]
To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

Mon, Feb 27, 2012 at 11:17 AM

Thank you.

Peace, Michael

Michael D. Evora, Esq.
Executive Director
RI Commission For Human Rights
180 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
[401.222.7561](tel:401.222.7561) (phone)
[401.222.7564](tel:401.222.7564) (TDD)
[401.222.2616](tel:401.222.2616) (fax)
"Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth" Shirley Chisholm

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

RHODE ISLAND CIVIL RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE REQUEST FOR SUPPORT ON LEGISLATION

Organization (if applicable): International Freedom Coalition

Contact Person: Sapphire Jule King 401-419-1267
Name Telephone No.

sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org
Email Address

Bill Number(s): H-7173 / S-2052 **Primary Sponsor:** Rep. Blazejewski / Sen. Tassoni

Committee: House Judiciary / Sen. Housing & Mun. Gov't **Hearing Date (if known):** _____

Summary of Bill:

Homeless Bill of Rights - This bill is in two parts. Part I would codify that homeless individuals have the right, among others, to vote, to be free from discrimination in employment, to use public spaces, to equal treatment by law enforcement, to quality healthcare. This part contains no enforcement mechanism. Part 2 would amend the RI Fair Housing Practices Act to prohibit discrimination in the basis of housing status.

Organizational/Individual Recommendation ("Support" or "Oppose"): Support

Civil Rights Implications of Bill:

A recent ethnographic study in a Providence homeless shelter revealed that service provider staff and security personnel subjected clients to abuse, harassment, and intimidation—as defined in the state's legal statutes—as a course of conduct. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the women followed for the study were minorities. Moreover, both the shelter's housing coordinator and a private rental agency denied HPRP participants the opportunity to live in apartments of their choosing, which otherwise met the criteria set by HPRP policies. Instead, homeless clients were shepherded toward less desirable neighborhoods and apartments that were markedly subpar when compared to others in the same price range. This bill would ensure that people experiencing homelessness receive the same protections against abuse and discrimination as enjoyed by the general population in other contexts.

Date Form Completed: Friday February 24, 2012

Please submit the completed form along with a copy of the bill to:

Michael Evora, RI Commission for Human Rights, 180 Westminster St., Providence, RI 02903; fax: 401.222.2616; email: [gov](mailto: @ri.gov)

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay
Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Appendix S: Formal Support Letter from RI Civil Rights Roundtable



Sapphire King <safiraking@gmail.com>

Homeless Bill - Support Letter

3 messages

Michael Evora <[REDACTED]> Thu, May 24, 2012 at 10:37 AM

To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org
Cc: "David H. Leach" <[REDACTED]>, Michelle Cortes-Harkins <[REDACTED]>, John Joyce-RIHAP <[REDACTED]>, josh.d.xavier@[REDACTED], Megan Smith-RIHAP <[REDACTED]>, Tish DiPrete <[REDACTED]>, mandelaking1427@[REDACTED], Marty Cooper <[REDACTED]>, Michael Evora <[REDACTED]>, Toby Ayers <ricj@ricj.org>, Mike Office <mdilauro@[REDACTED]>, Rachel Levenson <[REDACTED]>, Liz Tobin Tyler <[REDACTED]>, Michael DiLauro <[REDACTED]>

Dear Ms. King:

Attached please find a letter of support for the Homeless Bill of Rights from the RI Civil Rights Roundtable. I do hope you find this letter useful in the endeavor to pass this most crucial legislation and apologize for the delay in getting it to you. The Roundtable met this morning and, given that the Sub A version of the bill now addresses concerns some members had about enforceability, the group approved the letter.

Please email me with a reply to confirm receipt of this email. Is there anyone else to whom the letter should be sent?

Peace, Michael

Michael D. Evora, Esq.
Executive Director
RI Commission For Human Rights
180 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
401.222.7561 (phone)
401.222.7564 (TDD)
401.222.2616 (fax)
"Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth" Shirley Chisholm

This e-mail message contains confidential and/or legally privileged information belonging to the sender and intended only for the review and use of the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, dissemination, distribution, copying, review or use of the information contained in this e-mail message or any attachment is strictly prohibited. If you think that you have received this e-mail message in error, please call me and purge this e-mail message from your computer system immediately. Thank you.

Microsoft Word - LETTER OF SUPPORT HOMELESS RIGHTS.pdf
102K

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.

Sapphire Jule King <sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org>

Fri, May 25, 2012 at 1:17 PM

Reply-To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

To: Michael Evora [REDACTED]

Hello Michael,

Please give the RI Civil Rights Roundtable my gratitude for writing this letter of support for the Homeless Bill of Rights. Since the bill has yet to be passed out of the House Judiciary, I would appreciate you also sending a copy to Representatives Blazewski, Tanzi, Cimini, Handy, and Ajello.

I still firmly believe, as I always have, that this legislation will become law. The Roundtable's formal support will certainly help ensure that it does.

Thanks again,

Sapphire Jule King, MAEd
[International Freedom Coalition](#)
Founder & President
Call: 401.324.WINR

Click: 

[Quoted text hidden]

Michael Evora [REDACTED]

Fri, May 25, 2012 at 2:07 PM

To: sjking@strongfamiliesnow.org

Great work on your part! And feel free to distribute the letter to any/all Legislators you think would be helpful.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Peace, Michael

Power in Homeless Shelter Staff-Client Interactions: Influence on Length of Stay

Sapphire Jule King, M.A.Ed.



RI Civil Rights Roundtable

c/o RI for Community & Justice
80 Washington Street, Room 436
Providence RI 02903-1803
(401) 467-1717 x 102

May 24, 2012

The Rhode Island Civil Rights Roundtable, founded in 1998, is a consortium of over 40 community organizations and advocates committed to advancing the civil rights of all Rhode Islanders through community dialogue, legislative advocacy, educational forums and the like. The Roundtable presents this letter in support of 2012 H-7173 and S-2052 A. These bills would specifically prohibit law enforcement, health care workers, potential landlords and employers from treating homeless people unfairly because of their housing status.

While state law already prohibits discrimination based on characteristics such as a person's religion, gender, race or disability, there is no formal, specific protection for the homeless. With the passage of this bill, Rhode Island would be the first state to pass legislation to protect the homeless in such a comprehensive manner.

A recent ethnographic study in a Providence homeless shelter revealed that service provider staff and security personnel subjected clients to abuse, harassment and intimidation as a course of conduct. Sixty-seven percent of the women followed for the studies were minorities. Moreover, both the shelter's housing coordinator and a private rental agency denied HPRP participants the opportunity to live in apartments of their choosing, which otherwise met the criteria set by HPRP policies. Instead, homeless clients were shepherded toward less desirable neighborhoods and apartments that were markedly sub par when compared to others in the same price range.

This bill is in two parts. Part I would codify that homeless individuals have the right, among others, to vote, to be free from discrimination in employment, to use public spaces in the same manner as others, to equal treatment by law enforcement, and to emergency medical care. The Sub A passed by the Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee on April 26 allows for a civil action in court to enforce the rights enumerated in the chapter and expressly provides that a court "may award appropriate injunctive and declaratory relief, actual damages, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to a prevailing plaintiff". Part II would amend the RI Fair Housing Practices Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of housing status.

In light of the high unemployment rate of 11% in Rhode Island, the number of homeless Rhode Island residents has skyrocketed. No individual consciously decides to become homeless, and it is unjust for law enforcement, employers, healthcare workers, and landlords to deny the homeless opportunities that are afforded to those who are not homeless. The homeless should be able to enjoy the same rights as others, and those who deprive the homeless of these rights should be held accountable for their actions.

For these reasons, the Roundtable urges passage of these important bills.

Contact: Michael D. Evora, Esq., Legislative Committee Chairperson, 222-7561

**The RI Civil Rights Roundtable is a non-partisan network of civil rights organizations committed to supporting each other in developing a consensus agenda of public policy issues to work on together. All members do not necessarily agree with every position taken through consensus of the Roundtable.*