

CONSUMER NOTICE

CONNECTICUT HOMELESS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NETWORK

Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation receives funding from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide services for homeless and near homeless individuals and their families. A requirement of this funding is that Mercy Housing and Shelter participates in the Connecticut Homeless Management Information Network, which collects basic information about clients receiving services from us. This requirement was enacted in order to get a more accurate count of individuals and families who are homeless and to identify the need for different services.

We only collect information that we consider to be appropriate. The collection and use of all personal information is guided by strict standards of confidentiality. A copy of our Privacy Notice describing our privacy practice is available to all consumers upon request.

You do have the ability to share your personal information with other area agencies that participate in the network by completing a “Release of Information” form. This will allow those agencies to work in a cooperative manner to provide you with efficient and effective services.

Confidentiality of Client Records/Information

Policy: Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation (MHSC) will make every effort to protect clients' medical/psychosocial information and other sensitive information in accordance with applicable laws.

Procedures

MHSC staff will thoroughly explain to all new clients at the time of admission to a program the agency guidelines to protect clients' medical/psychosocial information.

MHSC staff will safeguard protected health/psychosocial information by securing client files in a locked file cabinet.

Client files shall be kept for the time period of seven (7) years from the date of discharge from the last Mercy Housing and Shelter program in which they were enrolled.

Records shall be destroyed by shredding or by other means that will preserve the confidentiality of the file's contents. Client-identifiable data stored on computer shall be erased at the time other records are destroyed.

Staff will carefully follow agency protocols for transmission and communication of protected health/psychosocial information to other providers.

Client records and or client information will only be released or shared after the client has signed a valid Release of Information Form, and have had that form explained to them in understandable language by a trained staff member. The only exceptions to this policy are:

In the case of a psychiatric or medical emergency and after consultation with the Program Director or Associate Director.

If the agency is presented with a Court Order to release said record, and again, only after consultation with the Executive Director or, in her absence, the Director of Program.

Staff will be educated regarding all aspects of protecting clients' medical/psychosocial information.

Violations of this policy will be handled according to MHSC disciplinary procedures.