**Apartment Shelter Project**

**Operations Manual**

# Overview

# Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, Inc. (FPGI)—a 501(c)(3) organization registered in the State of Indiana—operates a homeless shelter program for families called the Apartment Shelter Project (ASP). FPGI rents and furnishes apartments in the name of the organization, and through agreement with the property manager/owner(s), uses each apartment as an emergency and temporary shelter for a guest family with children experiencing homelessness. The goal of the program is for the guest family to achieve permanent housing of their own, either by taking over the lease of the apartment, or by finding a permanent housing solution elsewhere. A guest family is generally expected to complete the program (i.e., secure their own housing) within 90 days when possible, with the goal average length of stay in the program being 30 days or less.

# Renting and Furnishing Apartments

FPGI currently has two multi-family rental unit developments with which it partners to rent apartments to use as shelters. The first is Carriage House East, operated by the Gene B. Glick Company and with leasing office located at 10174 Tinton Court, Indianapolis, IN 46235. The second is New Bridge Apartments, operated by TBH Management and with leasing office located at 2372 Beckwith Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46218. Each property owner is required to have a Memorandum of Understanding with FPGI signed and on file at the FPGI offices (see Appendix). The executive director of FPGI is responsible for managing relationships with property owners.

The general guideline for renting apartments is to request a 12-month lease term of the landlord, with an addendum that allows for the termination of the lease with a 45-day notice by FPGI, typically requiring a fee to be paid such as one month’s rent (i.e., forfeiting the security deposit). Leases also can be transferred (technically, terminated early and re-rented) for no fee if a guest family is approved (and desires to) to rent the unit in their own name as their permanent housing solution.

Furniture is provided for each apartment by the Mustard Seed of Central Indiana, a nonprofit furniture bank located in Fishers, Indiana. For a referral and delivery fee of $250.00 for two-bedroom and $500.00 for three- or four-bedroom units, the organization will deliver basic furniture including beds, a dining room table with chairs, a sofa, bedstands, and more if available (See MOU with Furniture Bank and Addendum listing Furniture Provided). The executive director of FPGI, together with the Program Committee of the Board of Directors, is responsible for requesting furniture of Mustard Seed and coordinating delivery.

Furnishings for each apartment are solicited from congregation members of FPGI’s Interfaith Hospitality Network, or other new corporate/civic partners. A general guideline is to have sponsoring groups team up to support the set-up of an apartment, utilizing an online form like signupgenius.com or other list to not duplicate procured items (see Appendix for furnishings list). Items can be stored at the FPGI Day Center or congregation until ready for delivery, or delivery can be coordinated directly to the site of the apartment if timing allows for that. The executive director of FPGI, together with the Program Committee of the Board of Directors, is responsible for requesting furnishings of community partners.

FPGI’s facilities assistant is responsible for conducting an intake inventory and exit inventory with the guest head of household to ensure all items are present at each time (see Appendix for inventory forms). Donation drives can be held using collections/drop-offs or an online Amazon wish list to keep a consistent stock of replacement items. The wish list should be updated regularly by the FPGI facilities assistant and marketed when necessary. In an emergency, the facilities assistant can request Goodwill vouchers from the FPGI program manager to purchase replacement items, or can request the FPGI office manager to order the item on Amazon for delivery to the apartment.

# Apartment Orientation, Inspections, Maintenance, Supplies, and Mail

The guest family is required to submit to an inspection of all rooms of the apartment weekly, coordinated and executed with as consistent a schedule as possible by the FPGI facilities assistant (see Appendix for condition form).

The guest family also conducts an inspection of the unit using the condition form with the FPGI facilities assistant when they move into the unit and exit the unit.

The FPGI facilities assistant is to provide an orientation to the guest family when they move into the unit, covering all the areas of education on the Safe and Decent Living Form (see Appendix).

The apartment shelter should always have a two-week supply of basic household supplies, like toilet paper, paper towels, dish soap, cleaners, etc. The FPGI facilities assistant will take items weekly to restock the apartment during the inspection.

In the absence of the FPGI facilities assistant, the program manager or their designee is responsible for conducting all orientation, inspection, and restocking responsibilities.

# Apartment Changeover

When a guest family permanently exits an apartment in the ASP, the FPGI facilities assistant is responsible for ensuring the apartment is safe and decent for the next resident as soon as possible, whether that be as a continuation of the FPGI lease for the ASP or a return of operation to the property manager at the end of the lease. If FPGI is continuing the lease, the goal is to have an apartment ready for the next family within 72 hours or less, with a goal of 24 hours given the large demand for shelter.

The facility assistant is to use the following resources to ensure the apartment is clean in order of priority:

1. The guest family – When a family exits the ASP, the guest guidelines state they are to have the apartment in the same condition as it was when they arrived. Eligibility for AfterCare or any other supports is conditional on this.
2. Volunteers – If time allows, the facilities assistant can coordinate volunteers to help prepare an apartment for the next family.
3. Staff with other guest families who are seeking employment and willing – If staff time allows, FPGI staff can be asked to help with the turnover, and guest families can be employed at $12.00/hour contract, paying cash, to clean out a unit.
4. Professional cleaning service with approval of the program manager.

The facility assistant is to use the following resources to ensure the apartment is in working order:

1. If a damage is considered the result of normal wear and tear, submit a work order by email to the property manager, following up as necessary.
2. If a damage is not the result of normal wear and tear, the facilities assistant should email the volunteer maintenance list to seek in-kind donated repair services as fast as possible. If no volunteer is available within 48 hours, hire a professional service with approval of the program manager.

When a guest family leaves the ASP to permanent housing elsewhere, or leaves without a housing solution in place, all furniture, furnishings, and supplies that are the property of FPGI remain the property of FPGI and are to stay in the apartment unit. If a guest family is leaving to permanent housing of their own, they are provided the following if/as it is available: a referral to Mustard Seed for furniture, Goodwill vouchers for housewares (amount to be determined by program manager based on needs of family), a referral to Crooked Creek Food Pantry for food, and loaner mattresses in plastic delivered in the FPGI van until Mustard Seed furniture is delivered.

# Intake

**Definition:** Intake is the process by which a new guest family is screened and interviewed to determine eligibility for and accommodations needed to participate in the Apartment Shelter Project (ASP) of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis.

**Person Responsible:** The FPGI program manager is responsible for conducting all intakes, although a trained Master’s level intern can do intakes under the program manager’s supervision. In the Program Manager’s absence, the executive director is responsible for the intake procedures.

**Capacity Determination:** Intakes should only be undertaken when the ASP is operating at less than capacity (i.e., when there is a vacant, furnished, and cleaned apartment). Capacity is currently eight apartments, with the limiting factors being the program budget as determined by the executive director with approval by the FPGI Board of Directors, and also program manager capacity. Family size should not exceed the MOU guidelines with the property manager without written approval from the property manager (email can suffice). A general guideline is no more than two heartbeats per bedroom are allowed to reside in the unit, with exceptions made for a baby or toddler under two years of age.

**Referrals:** The ASP will accept referrals from direct callers or walk-ins. Other agencies can refer their clients to the ASP by having the client call or walk-in to the Day Center at 317-261-1562 during business hours Monday through Friday. Other agencies can check FPGI shelter availability online through the Indianapolis Appointments Plus system. The program manager or their designee is responsible for updating the ASP shelter availability in real time using the Appointments Plus system online.

**Procedure:**

* Program manager verifies there is an available unit with the facilities assistant, informs staff, and updates availability in the Appointments Plus system online.
* First caller or walk-in is screened on phone by program manager using “Phone Screening” document (see Appendix). Screenings are generally done only between 8:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, but exceptions may be made by the program manager.
* Other callers are referred to Indiana 2-1-1 to access other shelters, as no waitlist is maintained.
* Program manager makes eligibility determination based on Admissions Policy below, contacting executive director with any questions, and schedules intake interview with family.
* Program manager updates availability in Appointments Plus system online.
* Program manager—if staff is available—can provide transportation to the Day Center for family using FPGI van or approved personal vehicle if caller is within Marion County only.
* Program Manager or their designee conducts intake interview, including drug test, at the Day Center. Program manager reviews proof of identity and proof of custody of children, or works immediately with family to secure proof within 72 hours.
* Program Manager and/or their designees complete Intake Checklist (see Appendix).

# Admissions Policy

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, Inc. (“Family Promise”) has adopted the following policies for the acceptance of all prospective guest families that come to Family Promise seeking support services and admission into the Apartment Shelter Project (“the program).

1. All prospective guest families will be treated equally and will not be discriminated against based on race, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability or economic situations.

2. Only families that are homeless or threatened by homelessness will be considered; as this is the main mission of Family Promise. “Family” is defined as any adult person or group of adult persons with presence of one or more minor children for whom legal custody can be proven. This definition can therefore include, but is not limited to, non-traditional families like three-generational groups, same-sex partners with children, or biological siblings with one of their children. Single individuals who are homeless and apply to the program will be referred, as Family Promise is able, to other community programs that provide services to homeless individuals.

3. A family may be referred to Family Promise by a congregation, public schools, community agency, or any other entity, including self-referrals. No priority is given a family based on referral source.

4. Family Promise reserves the right to deny entry into its program to any family if, in Family Promise’s sole discretion, that family does not have the overall ability to thrive within the Family Promise program, and also if any person in that Family: a) has an alcohol or drug dependency or an active alcohol or illegal drug use, b) has any history of violent or other crimes, including, but not limited to, assault, battery, domestic violence and sex crimes, c) possesses, or there is a legitimate concern of possession, of a weapon, d) has tendencies toward aggressive behavior or loss of self-control, e) could be dangerous to other family members, program staff/volunteers, or program facilities, or f) has withheld information or provided false information. In Family Promise’s sole discretion, a family may be accepted into the program while another family member seeks in-patient treatment, and Family Promise, as it is able, will provide referral services as applicable.

5. Background checks may be conducted for each adult family member applying. The level and depth of the background checks will be determined by the Family Promise Director from all sources of information, including, but not limited to, information shared by the family making application and information gained through referral sources. Each adult family member will sign a release form authorizing background checks and use of the release form to help the family acquire services needed once they are in the program. This release will expire once the family has permanently left the Family Promise program.

6. Families who are to be included as clients served for the Emergency Solutions Grant from the City of Indianapolis must meet the criteria defined by the most up-to-date ESG Policies and Procedures published by the City of Indianapolis’ Department of Metropolitan Development (see separate document).

# Case Management/Program Participation

**Length of Stay:** Upon intake, a family is given a 30-day stay in the Apartment Shelter Project (ASP). Extension requests are given to the family when they have 15 days remaining. An extension of 15 days at a time can be requested. The extension request is determined by consensus and by at least two members of the Case Conference Team. The Case Conference Team is the Program Manager, the Case Manager for AfterCare, and the Executive Director. The decision is communicated to the family before seven days remain of their shelter stay so that they have adequate time to find their next place if extension is denied.

**Case Management:** All guest families are required to participate in case management with the goal of working together towards securing childcare/school, employment/income, housing, and healthcare as needed. The Program Manager or their designee provides the case management. The purpose of case management is to set weekly accountability goals with the case manager. It is also to record household income and expenses to justify any expenses from the Family Assistance Fund. Goals and budgeting are to be recorded on the Case Management Goal Sheet (see Appendix). Completion of these goals is assessed at the follow-up meeting, and new goals are set. Progress to goals is one of the key determination factors is deciding to grant extensions or not.

**Coordinated Entry:** All families participating in the ASP will have a Coordinated Entry Housing Application with a family VI-SDAT completed by a trained Navigator between three and seven days residing in the shelter. The timing is to ensure families have a brief chance to self-resolve before an application is added to the system, but also to prioritize the application to reduce the quickness with which a family may receive Rapid Re-housing or Permanent Supportive Housing assistance. The Program Manager or their designee coordinates the completion of the application with the system navigator. All procedures related to the Coordinated Entry System in the ESG Policies and Procedures published by the City of Indianapolis’ Department of Metropolitan Development (see separate document).

# Shelter Exit

At Shelter Exit, the Program Manager is to complete the relevant items on the Exit Checklist (see Appendix) for the guest family.

If a family is exiting to permanent housing and requesting Family Promise financial assistance for move-in costs (e.g., first month’s rent, security deposit, utility deposit, etc.), the Program Manager or their designee needs to complete a Housing Quality Checklist (see Appendix) for the new housing unit with an adult in the family before financial assistance will be provided.

The outcome for the family needs to be documented in the client file using the Confidential Case Note (see Appendix), in addition to any relevant disclosures about the shelter stay or program participation in case the family returns.

# Family Assistance Fund

FPGI recognizes the financial needs faced by the families it serves, and desires to financially assist families in the ASP to obtain permanent housing as fast as possible or to help families in the AfterCare (AC) program to maintain permanent housing when at risk of experiencing homelessness again.  Whenever possible, the Board of Directors will allocate part of the operating budget each year for a Family Assistance Fund (“Fund”) to accomplish this, to be governed by the following principles:

1. **Fairness:** Families will be treated as equally as possible.
2. **Goal Achievement:**Financial assistance shall always be used to directly affect housing and/or income and employment goals of the families.
3. **Stewardship:**Financial assistance is provided in a way that ensures donors—the source of the funding—of the use of the funds.

The Program Manager will manage the fund under the following guidelines:

1. **Allocations:**Upon approval of the annual budget, the Executive Director will establish a dollar amount per family to be served in ASP in the coming year.  That amount is the maximum any family can receive in financial assistance from FPGI.  No family is guaranteed that amount.  That amount will be reserved for the family for their entire participation in ASP and later in AC if a portion is unspent.  The Program Manager and Case Manager (AfterCare) will be responsible for tracking the disbursements and amounts available to families, with periodic review by the Executive Director. Disbursements will be recorded in a family’s file using the FAF Tracking Form (see Appendix).  All disbursements must follow the separate Financial Policies document of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis.

1. **Eligibility:**Only families in “good standing” in the ASP and AC programs are eligible for financial assistance disbursements.  Good standing means that the family should not have received a rules violation documentation that lists as a consequence suspension of access to the Fund.

1. **Requests and Approval:**Financial requests can be initiated by any member of the case management team: Program Manager, Case Manager (AC), or Executive Director (ED).  Disbursement requests will be submitted in writing to the Program Manager using the FAF Request (see Appendix) by the Program Manager or Case Manager (AC) as needed.  Expenses will be approved by the Executive Director in consultation with the Program Manager and/or Case Manager (AC) at weekly case conferences, with special conferences called as needed for expedited requests.

1. **Disbursements:**Disbursements from the fund will only be made to pay expenses directly related to help ASP and AC families achieve their goals of achieving a sustainable income and/or permanent housing.  Disbursements will only be made directly to the third party providing the need of the family and never to a family.  For a family that has recently moved in, this can include but is not limited to childcare for securing employment, workplace attire for securing employment, transportation for securing or retaining employment, a security deposit or first month’s rent for permanent housing, utility deposit for permanent housing, or rental assistance to maintain housing.  In these cases, the check would be made out to the childcare, the transportation provider, the auto mechanic, the landlord, or a gift card would be purchased and delivered to the family for the appropriate retail store (e.g., Payless for work boots).

# Day Center Facility

The lower level computer lab of the FPGI Day Center will be open to ASP families from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday through Sunday. It is located at 1850 N. Arsenal Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46218.

Guest families in the ASP may only use the Day Center for laundry with approval of the program manager, and should seek laundry services at their apartment complex or a private laundromat.

The Day Center will house the offices of all staff associated with the ASP, including Program Manager, Facilities Assistant, and Executive Director.

# Termination Policy

Termination of assistance and exit from the Apartment Shelter Project of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis is necessary when the Program Manager in conjunction with the Executive Director determines that the Guest Family has not complied with program guidelines as stated in the printed and signed “ASP Guest Guidelines” form (see Appendix).

**Exit Criteria:**

A Guest Family may be immediately exited from FPGI for behavior including, not limited to:

* Suspicion of drug and/or alcohol possession or use;
* Possession and/or use of weapons;
* Abusive, violent, or threatening behavior toward guest family’s own children or partner, other guests, staff, or volunteers;
* Vandalism or theft of property;
* Absence from the apartment at night without approval of program manager;
* Unapproved guests overnight at the apartment.

A Guest Family that has been exited from FPGI may appeal in person or in writing to the Executive Director after leaving the premises by contacting 317-961-1133 or mike@fpgi.org. A Guest Family may appeal in writing to the President of the Board by submitting a written letter or note in sealed envelope to the Office Manager at the Day Center.

**Termination of Assistance Criteria:**

A Guest Family may enter into a process of termination of assistance from FPGI for behavior including but not limited to:

* Failure to follow agreed upon case management plans (goals & objectives);
* Complaint or request from property owner or property manager;
* Displaying disrespectful attitudes and actions toward other individuals related to the ASP;
* Repeated or consistent infractions of rules as outlined in the Guest Guidelines;
* Failure to attempt goal completion;
* Failure to follow the mandatory savings plan.

A Guest Family may participate in the grievance procedure as part of the termination of assistance process.

# Grievance Policy

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis (FPGI)’s mission is to provide hospitality to homeless families and to help these families find and retain permanent housing. To fulfill our mission, we work for and with Guest families in our program. To provide hospitality and support services, we require cooperation from Guests, and have established Guest Guidelines to specify Guest responsibility. Consequences, up to and including involuntary termination from the program, are established and communicated to Guests in writing in the Guidelines. (See Appendix)

Consequences may consist of disciplinary action, including termination. If Guests feel that they have been wrongfully accused of breaking the rules and/or that they have been unjustly or inappropriately disciplined, they have a right to bring grievance to the appropriate authorities. The first step is to document their grievance in writing and to meet with the Executive Director at the earliest possible time. If the Executive Director is absent and going to be absent for more than three working days, or the grievance is concerning the Executive Director, the grievance shall be filed with the President of the Board of Directors. If filing a grievance, the Guest must immediately inform the staff making the charge and/or directing the disciplinary action. The Guest will have three working days to file their grievance. The Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors will answer the grievance within three working days after investigating the circumstances.

In the event that the alleged violation was particularly severe and caused or was likely to cause harm to persons or property, disciplinary action up to and including termination from the program can be enacted immediately. The person charged or disciplined can still file a grievance for reinstatement if so desired.

# Appendix

* MOU with Apartment Property Managers
* MOU with Furniture Bank (and Furniture Provided List)
* Furnishings & Housewares List
* ASP Intake & Exit Inventory
* ASP Inspection Sheet
* ASP Safe and Decent Living Form (for apartment orientation)
* Phone Screening Form
* Intake Interview
* Signature packet (Background check, Release of information, Homelessness Certification w/ Lead Acknowledgement, Guest Guidelines, Emergency medical release, Signature form, Drug test release, Landlord-Tenant Inapplicability Acknowledgement)
* Shelter Intake Checklist
* Sample Residency Letter
* Case Management Goals
* Case Management Confidential Case Notes
* Family Assistance Fund Tracking Form
* Family Assistance Fund Disbursement Request Form
* Request for Extension Form
* Shelter Exit Checklist
* Housing Quality Checklist