

Davis County Warming Center

Volunteer Handbook

Policies and Procedures

Admission policy

The goal is to provide life-saving access to a warming center to the most vulnerable people in our community when a Code Blue is issued for Davis County. To enter a warming center, clients are not required to be sober, compliant with mental health or addiction treatment plans, or engage in services.

Admission can be denied for the following reasons:

- Client has a restraining order against them that prohibits admission;
- Client is displaying violent or threatening behavior; severely disruptive behavior;
- Client has an infectious disease or appears to otherwise be ill and poses a threat to themselves and other clients.

Admission procedures:

- Clients will complete an expedited intake by Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers
- Clients will be asked to sign an “expectations form” acknowledging they understand expectations of behavior, criteria for involuntary exit, and grievance procedures.
- Clients denied access to the warming center will be referred to other community services.

Client expectations:

- Demonstrate responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Abstain from behavior that is disruptive and unacceptable to others. Examples include: verbal, physical, or sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behavior, threats and/or violent behavior, nudity, possessing weapons, drug dealing, etc.
- Respect the property. Any damage to the building may result in involuntary exit from the warming center.
- Smoke only in designated outdoor areas.
- Be responsible for their own belongings
- Weapons are not allowed in warming center and nothing may be used as a weapon.
- Use or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs is not allowed within the warming center

Circumstances justifying an involuntary exit:

- Violence or threatening behavior;
- Behavior that endangers health or safety of the client, other clients, volunteers, or staff;
- Theft;
- Destruction of property;

- Client has an infectious disease or appears to otherwise be ill and poses a threat to themselves and other clients.

Involuntary exit process:

- In the case of an immediate threat to the health and safety of other residents and/or volunteers ask the Davis County Sheriff's deputy on-site to intervene.
- CERT volunteers and/or sheriff's deputies will attempt to verbally de-escalate conflicts.
- Clients will be provided with an opportunity to "cool off" by having them move to a separate area in the warming center to take a break.
- Clients not meeting the Client Expectations above will be asked to meet with a CERT Volunteer/sheriff in private. The expectations not being met will be outlined and the CERT volunteers/sheriff deputy will ask the client what may be needed to help the client achieve the expectation(s) on an ongoing basis. Whenever possible, clients will be coached on how to meet the expectations rather than punishing the client (exiting them involuntarily) for not meeting the expectation(s).
- Clients unwilling or incapable of meeting the expectations after discussion with a CERT volunteer or sheriff deputy will be involuntarily exited.
- Exits should NOT be to the neighborhood. The Davis County sheriff will arrange transportation to Davis Behavioral Health receiving center or Davis County Jail.

Alcohol or drugs policy

- People who experience homelessness, like other members of our community, may be using substances to varying degrees. Everyone is entitled to safety from the cold whether or not they use substances. As a result, admission, discharge, and service restriction policies will not be based on substance use alone.
- Clients that use alcohol or any other substances are welcome to use the warming center so long as the client is able to meet the Client expectations described above.

Monitoring clients under the influence of drugs or alcohol

- Clients that have been observed as going to bed under the influence will be checked on once per hour, within close enough proximity that breath sounds can be heard or breathing can be seen in the chest.
- Sheriff's deputy will call EMS immediately if a client requests emergency medical assistance, is struggling to breathe, has stopped breathing, or does not respond to stimuli such as shouting or touch.
- Clients causing a significant disturbance to other clients while under the influence of alcohol or any other substance will be asked to refrain from doing so and return to their bed and go to sleep. If they are unwilling to do so or incapable of doing so, they may be asked to move or sit in view of CERT volunteers.
- Clients that become violent while under the influence of alcohol or any other substance will be treated the same as any other client that engaged in violent behavior. (take a walk, involuntary exit)
- If alcohol or drugs are found in the warming center, clients will be given the opportunity to dispose of it or leave the warming center for the night.

Rules:

1. Unfortunately, pets cannot be permitted in the Warming Center.
2. Clients can enter the facility at 8 PM, unless otherwise designated.
3. Alcohol or other controlled substances may not be used on the property
4. Smoking must take place in designated outdoor areas only
5. Clients must exit the building at 7 AM, unless otherwise designated. Clients will be given transportation back to the stop that they were picked up from. Must get on the bus.
6. Clients may not ask volunteers or staff for rides, money, or personal information.
7. Clients must demonstrate responsibility for themselves and their actions
8. Clients must abstain from behavior that is disruptive and unacceptable to others. Examples include: verbal, physical, or sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behavior, threats and/or violent behavior, nudity, possessing weapons, drug dealing, etc. NO VISIBLE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL
9. Clients must respect the property. Any damage to the building may result in involuntary exit from the warming center.
10. Clients must be responsible for their own belongings
11. Weapons are not allowed in warming center and nothing may be used as a weapon.

Contacts:

- Ember Herrick, Davis County Emergency Manager, eherrick@co.davis.ut.us, 385-239-0772 (C), 801-451-4108 (O)
- Ryan Steinbeigle, Davis County Grants Administrator, rsteinbeigle@co.davis.ut.us, 801-690-1157 (C), 801-451-3495 (O)

Welcome to the warming shelter team...

Thank you for choosing to donate your time as a volunteer. Warming center operations rely on volunteer supervision at all times while the center is open. The warming center would not be able to open its doors and serve clients without volunteers like you.

We ask for your patience and understanding as we get things up and running this first season. Policies & Procedures will most likely change as we figure out what will work best. We encourage volunteers to be flexible, share ideas, and provide helpful feedback. Please contact leadership via email with any feedback, suggestions, or to schedule a time to chat in person.

We communicate with volunteers in several ways:

- By email. If you've signed up to volunteer, we have your address — please keep an eye out for our emails. Our messages might end up in your spam folder or in your Gmail promotions folder, so check those places.
- Via phone. We may find it necessary to text or call when immediate needs occur. Please keep your phone number updated.

Onboarding

Training

The American Red Cross and Davis County Emergency Management will provide training for volunteers on the following topics:

- Overview of homelessness
- Operations of warming center
- Code blue policies and procedures

Shift Details & Scheduling

It will be incredibly helpful if you are willing and able to sign up for a recurring weekly or monthly shift. Volunteers who cover shifts regularly and often will become more familiar with policies and procedures, stay up to date with changes, and more comfortable with client interactions. Experienced volunteers add to the comfort of returning clients' experience and provide support for new volunteers.

Volunteer Support and Wellness

Working or volunteering in homeless services can lead to burnout. Please prioritize your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing above all else and reach out to leadership for support! This can be especially helpful as debriefing and support for those who have experienced a traumatic event.

Volunteer Policies

Client Interactions - Best Practice

Volunteers are expected to maintain a friendly and professional demeanor when interacting with others during their shift. Be sensitive to clients' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, many of which are shaped by their direct experience of trauma, poverty, homelessness, and loss. Please be respectful, and use trauma informed communication skills when reminding clients to follow the occupancy agreement and behavior guidelines. Volunteers are there to support and help clients to feel comfortable and safe. Volunteers are not therapists.

Be mindful of the amount of personal information you share with others. Do not discuss personal hardships or emotional challenges with, or in front of clients. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question or talking about a topic, communicate this in a respectful manner and disengage from the conversation.

- Do not have private conversations with clients away from others
- Don't exchange personal phone numbers, email addresses, or other contact information with clients.
- Never give money or gifts to clients. Never accept money or gifts from clients.
- Never offer to take clients into your home, or to give them rides in your personal vehicle.

In order to volunteer onsite it is imperative that these boundaries and expectations are held.

Training Leadership will check in with volunteers who are unable to hold and follow the highlighted boundaries and expectations. Volunteers will be asked to review policies and procedures and sign an agreement.

Social Media Policy

Do not friend clients on Facebook, follow them on Twitter, Instagram, or other platforms, or share handles. If a client sends you a friend request, decline. (On Facebook, use the Ignore button.) Don't interact with clients on social media, mention clients by name in your posts, or post photographs of clients.

Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

Please follow the guidelines below to be respectful of clients' privacy:

- Do not gossip or speak negatively about clients or volunteers.
- No private conversations should occur behind closed doors.
- Do not discuss disciplinary actions for clients with or in front of other clients
- Do not approach or engage with a warming center client if you see them out in the community unless they initiate an interaction or conversation.

- Client information collected in the course of telephone conversation, check-in processes, and interactions with law enforcement and social service personnel must remain confidential.
- Volunteers will not disclose identifiable information about a client with or around anyone who has not signed a confidentiality pledge.
- Volunteers should not disclose any information or answer personal questions a client might have about another client.

**These rules ensure your safety and the safety of our clients. Persons who knowingly violate this trust will not be allowed to continue as an onsite warming center volunteer.

Management of Supplies

If you notice that an item is running low, reach out to rsteinbeigle@daviscountyutah.gov.

Sick Client Policy

Clients who are exhibiting flu - like symptoms will be asked to wear a mask at all times while inside the Warming Center. Please document clients who are exhibiting symptoms in shift notes. Make an effort to sanitize and clean commonly used areas more often.

Family with Minor Children Policy

If clients arrive with minor children reach out to Open Doors to access non-congregate shelter for families.

Open Doors

P: 385-320-9043

E: athirkill@opendoorsutah.org

Client Tobacco Use

Clients will be permitted scheduled smoke breaks. Smoking areas are designated at each site. Clients will not be permitted to smoke, chew tobacco, or vape inside of the warming center.

Pet Policy

Unfortunately, pets are not permitted in the Warming Center due to regulations governing the buildings being used as a Warming Center.

Restroom Checks

Volunteers will keep a mental note of how long each client has been in the restroom. If a client's time in the bathroom has passed 10+ minutes a volunteer should check on the clients.

- Set timer for 10 min when client goes into the bathroom
- If client is not back when the timer goes off knock on the door of the bathroom and ask if they are ok (do this even if it is the opposite sex)
- If you don't get a response ask again, If still no response alert the other volunteer and go into the bathroom

Spills and Other Messes

- If there's a food or beverage spill, put on gloves and do your best to clean it up with sponges and paper towels
- If you can't clean the spill completely, do what you can and block any slip, trip, or falls so clients and volunteers can safely move through the facility
- Document this information in shift notes. Be sure to include what was spilled, location of spill and what was used to clean it up.
- If you're faced with vomit, blood, or any other biohazard, put on two pairs of gloves and utilize the biohazard cleaning kit.

Unauthorized Visitors

- **DO NOT** allow anyone to enter the facility during operating hours who is not a warming center volunteer or client. First responders, EMS, excluded.
- If they refuse to leave, or cause a disruption of ANY Kind, ask a sheriff deputy to get involved.

Our goal is to keep as many people out of the weather as we safely can. Clients who have trouble following rules can make that hard. We try to work with them to find a way to let them stay. However, it's sometimes necessary to remove a client for behavior that breaks the warming center policies and procedures. As a volunteer, you have the right to ask a client to leave.

Clients should be given the opportunity to correct their behavior after a request has been made by the volunteer. If this is ignored and the behavior continues, they should be asked to leave.

Use your best judgment, refer to the policies and procedures and then do the following:

- Have a conversation with them away from other clients if possible, preferably with another volunteer at the check in desk/table.
- Ask them to gather their belongings and leave immediately. Calmly let them know that if they do not comply a sheriff deputy will get involved.

- Make a note of the clients name and nature of the incident and send to rsteinbeigle@daviscountyutah.gov and eherrick@daviscountyutah.gov.

** Be sure to follow de-escalation and trauma informed communications skills covered in training. Refer to training resources if needed.

Certain serious offenses trigger a season-long removal from the warming center, and are generally imposed by a Warming Center Coordinator or Leader:

- Violence or threats against other clients or volunteers
- Using drugs or alcohol on the premises
- Distributing drugs or alcohol on the premises
- Accessing or using a weapon
- Repeated offenses — at the coordinator or leaders' discretion, multiple incidents from the same client can result in removal for the season.

Tips and Help

Conflict Resolution – De Escalation

Of key importance in intervening in a conflict and working to de-escalate aggressive behavior is to remain calm and speak slowly and at a low volume. Pay attention to your body language. Your posture and position are important. Do your best to keep you and your body relaxed, positioning yourself to the side so all parties involved can see you. Your posture is to be one of authority, but speaking quietly and firmly, making good eye contact with those involved.

It's not our job to resolve disputes between clients, so don't feel obligated to do that. It is our job to maintain order and quiet. If a dispute is causing disruption, separate the people who are arguing (it can help to have the other volunteers assist and have one volunteer talk to each client) and do your best to de-escalate.

Break Down Barriers

- Acknowledge and embrace your powerlessness. Accept the person wherever they are and be there with them.
- For those struggling with addiction, keep the hope of recovery alive at all costs. Without hope all is lost.
- **Rethink** ambivalence and resistance.

Communication Tips

- Reflect and validate the person's concern regardless of the content or whether you agree with them. Do this throughout the discussion.
- Collaborate with the person to explore the underlying cause of their frustration... it can be deeper than what the presenting concern is.

- Collaborate with the person to explore short and long term ways to address the presenting concern.
- Actively listen and intentionally respond in a sympathetic tone to better understand and help the client feel safe.

Critical Incidents Policy

All critical incidents must be documented. These include, but are not limited to, incidents where the Center's clients or volunteers have been exposed to accident, injury, or illness (potential liability), where outside intervention has been sought (police, fire, emergency medical services, etc.) or an act of physical violence has occurred, or been threatened.

Mental Health Emergencies

As with medical emergencies, mental health emergencies can be life-threatening. A mental health emergency exists when people are at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others, or their judgment and ability to care for themselves is so compromised that they may not be able to function safely.

Signs of a mental health emergency include:

- Expressions of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, plans, or behaviors
- Imminent threats or aggression toward others
- Loss of contact with reality, including paranoid or grandiose thinking
- Hallucinations, including hearing and/or seeing things no one else can perceive
- Extreme agitation
- Rambling or incoherent speech
- Severe panic

What to do in a mental health emergency:

Do not leave the person who is in crisis alone, even for a moment. **Involve the sheriff deputy on duty or call 911.**

If possible, keep other clients safe by encouraging the client with the emergency to sit or stand in an area away from the other clients.

Contact the Warming Center Emergency Coordinator or his/her delegate as soon as possible. Provide concise accurate information regarding the incident.