



INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK OF
SUMMIT COUNTY

Congregational Re-Training Handout

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77 West Miller Ave. Akron, Oh 44301

Mission Statement

A consolidation of faith congregations caring for families in need of shelter, meals, and compassionate assistance that leads them to secure a stable home environment.

Listening with compassion to each individual family's concerns and dreams.

Helping locate or develop affordable family housing.

Maintaining integrity in all circumstances and insisting on quality in all programs.

Helping sustain the dignity of our clients while they build a stable future for their children.

At the heart of our mission are the children.

Compared to their peers who have never been homeless, children who have been homeless are:

- Physically less well
- Emotionally less well
- Academically less adept
- Developmentally less advanced

What does IHNSC do?

First

- We are an emergency shelter for homeless families –one to four families at a time – 20 to 30 families per year.
- We provide everything the family needs for basic living, free of charge, as long as they are with us.
- We do this in partnership with more than 29 local congregations.

Second

- We provide up to 12 months of case management, for former guests of our emergency shelter.

Why is a family homeless shelter necessary?

Homelessness is a persistent, pervasive and growing problem, right here in Ohio.

- 600,000 families experience homelessness per year in the United States.
- That is reported as 1.35 million children.
- This is more than three times the number of homeless persons found in 1991, more than four times the number in 1987.
- Families with children comprise the fastest growing segment of homelessness.

For more information check the National Alliance to End Homelessness @ www.endhomeless.org

Why is new affordable family housing needed?

The cost of housing, both owned and rental, is rising steadily. Average wages, however, are stagnant.

- The economy continues to create more service sector jobs, which do not pay well, instead of manufacturing jobs. Generally, poor adults are poorly educated, so they are not eligible for professional jobs.
- In addition, formerly affordable housing is being converted to market rate housing or is being torn down and not replaced.
- To “afford” the “average” two-bedroom apartment in Summit County, a family needs over \$32,000 in annual income –over two times the current minimum wage.

For more information on the relative costs of housing, see “Out of Reach” on the website of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, www.nlihc.org. Additional information can be found in the annual “Paycheck to Paycheck” report of the Center for Housing Policy (www.nhc.org/chp/p2p/).

What is a realistic monthly budget?

Pay Check to Pay Check has done extensive research into the typical costs of housing, food, health care and child care. Want to see how you measure up/ Check out the Jobs Now Coalition out of St. Paul Mn.'s website combines this information into a "Family Wage & Budget Calculator."

In Summit County, this is what it typically costs for a **single Mom and two children**. The costs are based upon monthly budget requirements necessary to achieve a "no frills" standard of living. No money is included for debt payments or skills training. There is no entertainment budget, no restaurant meals, no vacation, and nothing is set aside for emergencies, retirement or children's college education. The basic needs standard falls short of what's usually called a middle-class standard of living.

Category	Monthly Cost
Food	426
Housing	821
Health Care	
Transportation	50
Child Care	1188
Clothing/Other	200
Net Taxes	
Total Monthly Cost	2685
Total Annual Cost	32220
Hourly Wage Needed	15.50

Roughly 36% of current workers at jobs located in Summit County make \$15.50. per hour or more –Roughly 2/3 of jobs in Summit County pay less than \$20/hour.

What types of jobs pay \$15.50 per hour?

The JOBS NOW Coalition's research and the Wage & Budget Calculator are supported by grants from the Otto Bremer Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota State Network Fund, the Minneapolis Foundation, the Northwest Area Foundation and the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation.

For more information, see www.jobsnowcoalition.org.

What does a family receive in public assistance?

In Summit County, a single Mom and two children receive a maximum of \$410 per month in cash assistance and \$426 per month in food stamps. In addition, the family receives Medical Assistance support, which covers most doctor visits and medical treatments. If the Mom is extremely fortunate, she will find someone to provide child care for free while she is looking for a job.

Here's what her budget looks like, if she is trying to live on her cash assistance, food stamps, Medical Assistance and has free child care.

Category	Monthly Cost
Food – net of food stamps	426
Housing	821
Health Care – on Medical Assistance	
Transportation	50
Child Care – free	0
Clothing/Other = Diapers, cleaning supplies, laundry etc.	268
Net Taxes	0
Total Monthly Cost	1,565
Cash Assistance	410
Monthly Gap between Cost and Cash Assistance	1,155

How can she survive?

What would you tell her to cut out of her budget?

How does IHNSC screen prospective guests? What would cause a family to not qualify?

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County attempts to screen prospective guest families for these purposes:

- We attempt to screen in families that we can help.
- We attempt to screen out families that probably will not be able to live peaceably in our communal atmosphere. There is not much privacy, either at the Day Center or in the congregations.
- We also attempt to screen out families that may present risk or danger to other guests, staff, volunteers, the Family Center and congregational spaces.

We do this by:

- Asking prospective guests about their physical and emotional health, their criminal records, and their previous episodes of homelessness.
- To the extent possible, we check a national database of criminal convictions. This covers all 50 states and provides information about felony convictions, to extent that the various states and localities have provided that information.
 - This database generally does not include any information on misdemeanors or gross misdemeanors. It also does not include any information about charges that did not result in convictions, outstanding arrest warrants or investigations-in-progress. For all jurisdictions, the national database also will not include the most recent convictions.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County does not interview prospective guests unless we have an actual opening. We do not keep a waiting list because it does not work. The overwhelming majority of the prospective families would not be reachable even as little as a week later. We do keep a phone screening record that is dated and we encourage families to contact us if we are unable to contact them.

Why would a family not qualify for emergency shelter?

- Criminal record
- History of serious emotional/mental illness
- Serious physical illness
- Recent history of domestic abuse

Whenever we must turn a family away, we attempt to suggest other resources.

Relationships between guests and volunteers

Generally, Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County has found that its volunteers just “get it” and need very little instruction about how best to conduct themselves around the guests and their children. There are some issues that have come up from time to time, however.

- Volunteers do not proselytize. Interfaith Hospitality Network is an interfaith, ecumenical organization. Just as our volunteers all respect each other’s faith traditions, so should volunteers respect the guests’ faith traditions.
- Volunteers show respect for the guests’ time, property, opinions, parenting style, etc.
 - Being judgmental is not hospitable. Unless the congregation’s property is at risk or a person is in danger, volunteers should tread lightly in commenting on or correcting a guest’s behavior. Any concerns about a guest’s behavior should be discussed with the primary Host Coordinator(s) or with the Interfaith Hospitality Network.
 - Guest rooms should be locked during the day when possible.
 - Congregation staff and volunteers should not enter guest sleeping rooms without knocking or calling loudly and then receiving permission, unless absolutely necessary.

- Volunteers maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and the guests.
 - The most common way that volunteers violate the boundaries between themselves and guests is by making personal gifts of money or things to guests. This is personal charity, which is not a good idea. From the circumstances of the guest's homelessness, the volunteer starts out in a position of power over the guest, and the guest knows it. When a volunteer makes a substantial gift to a guest, the power relationship gets even more unbalanced.
 - Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County does not wish to quash generosity! If a volunteer perceives a particular need, and the volunteer wants to fill that need, please call the staff. We will help the volunteer make the gift, if it is appropriate, but we will make it anonymous. We will also take care to handle the gift so that the other guests staying at the congregation are not made to feel unfairly treated.
- Experienced volunteers recognize that the overwhelming problems faced by most of the IHN guests cannot be solved quickly. While volunteers are encouraged to offer job leads, housing opportunities and other resources to the guests, "success" does not come quickly.

Training topics

General rule: It's not about us, it's about them! That is, the congregation volunteers are primarily responsible for making the guests comfortable and welcome, even if the guests' choices are not the same ones that the volunteers would make. This program is not about the values, desires and needs of the staff & volunteers – this program is about the needs of the guests. We are trying to practice true hospitality.

Some common issues:

- Please instruct drivers to use the gas card in the log book. Always get a receipt and place the receipt in the log book. Please let staff know in person or via voice mail or email if the card has been expended and staff will replace it.
- Drivers are in charge of the radio!!!! This has been an issue for some families in the past.
- Not Food or Drinks are allowed in the van. In summer months bottled water only.
- IHN Cell Phone- Please have evening volunteer keep the cell phone with them. Occasionally staff may need to contact the hosts or guests in the evening.
- Van drivers should make sure the cell phone is back in the log book before leaving the congregation in the morning.
- Food. Keep it simple and provide more than enough.
 - Most guests prefer separate foods, (protein, starch, vegetables), not casseroles or hot /spicy dishes.
 - When in doubt, have larger quantities than you think you'll need, and plan for what to do with the leftovers. The guests are very offended when there is not enough food – in the culture of poverty, this is very rude, and it implies disrespect.
 - The same goes for lunches. Remember that all of the guests are getting up very early. One simple lunch will generally not be enough. Try to take account of the need for snacks.
- Evening activities.
 - The guests enjoy having some structure to the evening, usually.
 - The children love art projects, cooking projects, short movies, snacks, etc.
 - In the spirit of true hospitality, activities are not mandatory. The guests can be invited, cajoled and bribed to come, but not mandated.
- Gratitude. The guests are grateful for the time and attention that they receive from the volunteers, but many do not express it. Volunteers should remember that the guests, especially the adults, are deeply ashamed that they are homeless with their children and are under extreme stress. This overload of emotion and guilt clouds their thinking. If they were not in this situation, they might be more traditionally polite. Volunteers should not expect the guests to express gratitude.
- Acquisitiveness.

Interfaith Hospitality Network's guests are often extremely poor and are desperate. In their experience, it is often better to grab something you "need" and ask questions later. The guests understand that these actions are wrong. Nevertheless, sometimes the guests rationalize their actions because the churches and the volunteers seem to have such abundance when the guests have nothing.

Volunteers and congregations do themselves and the guests a disservice when valuable items are not secured and the areas where the guests are not allowed to go are not made clear.

- Conversation. The guests may not want to discuss their situation. They may feel ashamed. You are strangers – they may see no benefit in confiding in you. They may feel that your questions are judgmental, but they may not have the strength to decline to answer.

- Child rearing practices.
 - Our guests are raising their children the way that they have learned to parent through their own experiences. This may not be the way that you would do it. Our hope is that you will model good parenting behavior and hope that it rubs off.
 - If you see something that you believe is harmful to the child, what are your options?
 - Intervene politely, in a calm voice. Try to avoid shaming the guest in front of other guests or volunteers. You can certainly say that the behavior you observed is not allowed on the congregation's property.
 - Talk with the primary Host Coordinator or a more experienced volunteer.
 - Call the Day Center and leave a message for staff. We will deal with it the next day.
 - Call the emergency number and request assistance from staff.

- Parents are responsible for their own children. When volunteers take responsibility for guest children, when the children's parents are not in the room, the volunteers should get permission and should set a time limit on the activity. We do not recommend this practice. Generally, the parents should not be allowed to leave the congregation property without their children. This is subject to judgment and discretion, depending on the circumstances.

- Leading by example, not by preaching. Model good parenting when working with the children. Model good de-escalating skills, when intervening in disputes between guests. Have another volunteer present or within earshot, to avoid "he said, she said" situations.

"Safe Church" practices

No one can ignore the fact that children are sometimes abused, physically or emotionally or sexually, by adults. None of us want this to happen to any child.

Interfaith Hospitality Network encourages the hosting congregations to adopt common sense "safe church" practices to guard against the possibility that a guest child or a volunteer child would be abused at the church. In addition, these simple practices will help protect the guest adults and the volunteer adults against unfounded accusations by children.

The basic rule is that no one adult should supervise any number of children that are not related to the adult, on the church property.

- When one or two children are supervised away from their own parents, at least two adults should be involved in the supervision. At best, these two adults are not related to each other and one is male and one is female.
- When three or more children need to be supervised, at least three adults should be involved in the supervision. Again, the supervising adults should not be related to each other and both genders should be present.
- **AGAIN, WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS PRACTICE**

- In the event of an emergency, have the adult of the family that needs supervision select another adult guest to supervise the child/children. There are EMERGENCY CHILDCARE FORMS in the logbook.

One additional rule to consider: Any volunteer who has been part of the congregation for less than a reasonable period of time should be encouraged to take on tasks other than intense interaction with children. What is a “reasonable period of time?” Six months would be the minimum; some suggest that two years is better.

Whatever rules are adopted, they should apply to everyone and should be enforced consistently. The rules are not meant to suggest that children are at special risk in the congregation. These rules protect children from abuse by deterring abusers and attempting to eliminate situations where abuse could occur. These rules also protect well-meaning adults from unfounded accusations by making sure that unrelated adults are always present to witness what takes place – and what does not – so that children cannot fabricate events.

Contacting Staff of Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County

When in doubt, over communicate!!

- If a volunteer has a concern about a guest, that concern is automatically legitimate.
- If you do not tell us, we will not know.
- If we do not know, we cannot do anything about it.
- Guests frequently behave differently in the evening than they do during the day.

Any information, concern, question or news can be left on the IHN voicemail at anytime. You do not have to wait until the next morning and remember to call, although you sure can if you want to.

330-253-8081

In the future we hope to have a “daily update hotline” available to any volunteer who wants to know the latest news about the guests who will be at the church that evening. This line will be updated every day. So, if a family does not appear for dinner, call the hotline to see if there is a new message that explains their absence.

We will notify all coordinators when this takes place.

In an emergency, or anytime during the evening or overnight that a volunteer or guest has an important concern that cannot wait until the next day, please call the IHN emergency cell phone. The number is located in the logbook. Please do not give this number to the guests to use. This is a personal # used for emergency purposes only.

- If No Answer---Leave a message, including your callback number. If you are using a church phone, be sure that it can get incoming calls during the evening. Leave a volunteer next to the telephone to wait for the call back, please.
- Be patient. The message may not get to the cell immediately. The staff person who has the phone may not be in a position to respond immediately.

330-806-7295

Every congregation’s primary volunteers should know where the IHN log book and First – Aid kit are located. This includes home and cell telephone numbers for staff members. These numbers may be used by any volunteer who feels the need, but should not be shared with guests.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County Staff

Administration

Executive Director Pamela H. Betty LSW, MSW – ihns Summit@sbcglobal.net
In overall charge of all agency activities. Responsible for administration, staff, policies, liaison with Board, fundraising, volunteer training.

Bookkeeper Betsy Rees

Emergency Shelter

Case Manager Pauline Egan – paulineihns Summit@sbcglobal.net
Primary point of contact for both guests and congregation volunteers. Selects and case manages guest families. Arranges evening classes and other special visits to congregations during hosting weeks.

House Manager
In charge of daily household chores, donations, supplies, client intakes, and many other important support functions.

Weekend point of contact for both guests and volunteers.- Pamela Betty 330-806-7295

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Summit County
77 West Miller Ave.
Akron, OH 44301
330-253-8081 (phone) 330-253-8082 (fax)

<http://www.ihns Summit.org/>

IHN WISH LIST

The following is a list of items that we are always in need of at the Family Center.

General Supplies

- Laundry Detergent – **Powder only please**
- Bleach
- Fabric Softener (Sheets Only)
- Lysol Spray Disinfectant and cleaning products (Windex, cleanser, wipes etc.....)
- Dish soap for hand washing dishes
- Kitchen and Bathroom sponges and scrubbies
- Paper Towels (any brand or design, plain white is just fine)
- Toilet Paper (same as above)
- Facial Tissue (same as above)

Toiletries

- Deodorant - Ladies and Men's
- Shampoo and Conditioner – full size bottles are fine
- Hand Lotion – any brand plain, unscented is the best
- Hair Brushes
- Disposable razors and shaving cream
- Soap and plastic soap holders
- Liquid antibacterial soap
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer

Baby Items

- Baby Wipes
- Diapers and Pull-ups (All Sizes ok, but we are always more in need of the larger sizes 4, 5, & 6)
- Teething rings, pacifiers, sippee cups, baby spoons.
- Baby shampoo, lotion, oil, ointment, and diaper rash treatments. Small sizes are better than large economy sizes, for our purposes.
- Powdered formula. Enfamil with Lipil is what most families want.

Miscellaneous Items

- GIFT CARDS to Giant Eagle, Marc's, Wal-Mart
- Metro Transit bus tickets
- Gas Cards (\$10 Values Preferred)
- Linens and Pillow Cases
- New socks and underwear/boxers, all sizes, men's, women's, boys and girls

Household Items

(We try to stock these items so we can give them to families once they obtain housing, and occasionally for use at the Family Center)

- Silverware & Kitchen Utensils
- Blender/ Mixers
- Pots & Pans
- Bake ware & Mixing Bowls
- Dishes
- Towels- Hand, Wash, Bath
- Sheets, Pillows, Blankets
- Alarm Clocks & Radios

Furniture Warehouse List

Mattresses, box spring	Irons & Ironing Boards	Coffee Makers; Microwaves
Couches & Loveseats	Small occasional tables	Bookcases; child strollers
Dressers	Kitchen Tables & Chairs	Televisions/ VCRs
Upholstered chairs		

Drop-off Information:

All items, **other than furniture**, may be dropped off at the IHNSC Family Center
Located at 77 West Miller Ave. Akron, OH 44301

Furniture may be donated to the CORE Warehouse located in Cuyahoga Falls. Please call for more information.

Please call first before dropping off items. To donate an item not listed anywhere above, please call the Day Center and speak with a staff person. Please do not bring us items we do not want or need – we will just have to invest time and money in disposing of them.

Thanks in advance for any of the supplies that you may be able to help with!!!!!!!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK OF SUMMIT COUNTY

These are ongoing opportunities to volunteer at the
Interfaith Hospitality Network Daytime Family Center at 77 West Miller Ave. Akron, OH 44301
If you are interested in any of these opportunities, or have another idea for helping us, please call and speak to
Pauline Egan, Pamela Betty, or Jody Hansbarger at the Family center @ 330-253-8081.

Weekend Volunteers at the Family Center- Per IHN guidelines, we never leave our guests alone at the Family Center, so in order to keep budgets down give the small staff the weekend off, we must rely on the support of our wonderful weekend Family Center volunteers. This is a great opportunity for volunteers who want to spend some quality time with our families at our Daytime Family Center in Akron. These volunteer opportunities are generally for Saturdays, and sometimes on Holidays, in 3 hour shifts between 8:30am and 5:30pm. (Generally 8:30-11:30, 11:30-2:30, & 2:30-5:30) Volunteers can do a 3 hour, 6 hour, or the full 9 hour shift if they choose to.

There are no specific skills required, other than at least one of the volunteers must be an adult. We would prefer these volunteers to have gone through our volunteer training and come to the center prior to taking a shift to get oriented at the Family Center. Our volunteers do anything from planning activities with the kids in the program, arts and crafts, playing family games, or watching a family movie with our guests. Sometimes it may be just lending an ear in conversation or offering non-judgmental moral support and advice if asked. One or more volunteers may be here at the same time and some people bring their children and family with them. (Since we are a family shelter only, there will always be some children in our program.)

Another suggestion for weekend volunteering is that it's also a great opportunity to catch up with an old friend or relative you just don't get to spend quality time or much time at all with. If you come to the Family Center together to do a 3 hour shift and bring some lunch, you can make it a lunch date with a friend to do some catching up and at the same time you're both doing something great to help IHN.

Youth group for weekends, we are very open to having a group of 5 to 10 youth and one or two adults come to us on a weekend day for 3 to 6 hours for a service project. The group can bring things to do with small children with them, like games or a snack, or they can just come and do whatever it is we need done that day, which could include all sorts of cleaning, organizing, hauling, raking, etc. Again, flexibility is the key.

Organizer - time and day flexible – It is limited, but we do have some storage rooms here at the Family Center and lots of things to store and new donations are coming in all the time. This would be great for someone who loves to organize and isn't afraid of moving boxes around and sorting things. Once every other week, for 2 or 3 hours would be great! This could be anytime that we're open, and any day of the week is fine. This person could also make an occasional haul to Goodwill for us, to take away the things we don't need.

Clerical Assistance- time and day flexible , Tasks could include making copies, answering phones, researching funding opportunities, data entry, just to name a few!

IT- Information Technology- time and day flexible, Anyone with knowledge of Windows Operating Systems

Marketing- time and day flexible, Non profit experience a plus, but not required.