

THE WAY STATION



Operations and Communications Plan

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Respite Program Phone: To contact the Respite Counselor on duty

Phone: TBD

Hygiene & Clinical Program Phone: To contact the site manager on duty.

Phone: TBD

Respite Program Supervisor: TBD

Email:

Phone:

Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager: TBD

Email:

Phone:

Homeless Outreach Team Coordinator: Marisa Shoepach

Email: marisa_schoepach@whatcomhsc.org

Phone: (360)-739-2921

Bellingham Police Department (non-emergency contact): TBD

Email:

Phone:

THE WAY STATION OPERATIONS PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Way Station is a safe and welcoming facility where individuals and families experiencing homelessness can find a constellation of services to assist their transition to sustainable housing and access to social and health services. Specifically, the following services are offered:

- Recuperative respite care staffed 24-7
- Health care services provided by Unity Care NW (medical, behavioral health, case management, and substance use care) with expanded access to laboratory testing for illness, vaccine administration, and health monitoring.
- Hygiene services: restrooms, shower, and laundry facilities.
- Case management services will be provided linking visitors and medical respite residents with social and health care service resources.
- Connections to coordinated entry to the homeless housing system and stable housing.

The building housing The Way Station, located at 1500 State St, is owned and operated by Whatcom County (WC) and currently houses Health Department staff. The first floor of the building is divided into the two units of The Way Station – the Clinical and Hygiene Program operated by Unity Care NW (UCNW) and the Respite Program operated jointly by PeaceHealth (PH) and by Opportunity Council (OC) with fiscal operations support from PeaceHealth. The second floor of the building may house programs such as OC's Homeless Outreach Team, the GRACE program, and Whatcom County Health Department's (WCHD) Needle Exchange Program.

OPERATIONS PLAN

Facility

The Way Station Partners, the Opportunity Council, Unity Care NW, Peace Health, and Whatcom County (building owner), will work with the recommendations of the City of Bellingham to create a facility layout that both includes both accessible facilities for those with disabilities and adheres to fire, zoning, and all municipal codes. The facility will adhere to the Washington State guidelines for service animals and accommodations will be made for animals consistent with the state's service animal protocol. This Respite Program will serve approximately 18 guests at a time with recuperative respite stays for patients discharging from PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center with hygiene facilities and sleeping accommodations. The Clinical and Hygiene Program projects it will serve approximately 750 visitors a year.

All partners are dedicated to operating a safe, welcoming, and healing environment and will ensure all applicable public health requirements and recommendations are met.

Security and Emergency Plan

Respite Program

The Opportunity Council will create multilayered security measures and provide training before the site is open to guests. The Respite Program is designed to have cameras, a monitoring station, and 24-7 staffing.

The Opportunity Council is vigilant in their mission to remain good stewards within the communities they serve. It is our intent that the community will not only remain safe, but also become a safer place than it was previously. Staff will continually monitor a perimeter around the facility as well as the facility itself while guests are present. The Opportunity Council will build upon a solid relationship with the Bellingham Police Department to create a responsive crisis referral process for instances where it is appropriate -- conflict resolution, theft, trespassing, unruly behaviors, and mental health crisis, etc. A database will be in place to alert all staff of any potential safety issues.

Opportunity Council will have a designated 24-hour contact for fire and emergency: TBD.

More details are available in the attached Emergency and Communications Plan.

Clinical and Hygiene Program

Unity Care NW (UCNW) has existing security and emergency plans that will be implemented at this location. UCNW will employ a facilities/program manager on-site to monitor the Clinical and Hygiene Program.

The Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager will:

- Ensure safety and well-being of patrons by enforcing rules and policies, assisting with deterring theft, violence, vandalism, illegal activities, and infractions of the facility's code of conduct.
- Provide outreach and information to neighborhood organizations, residents, and the community which will include attending meetings.
- Respond to neighborhood concerns.
- Respond to emergencies on site. Call 911 in the event of an emergency such as a fire or serious ailment.
- Alert The Way Station's Clinical and Hygiene staff, as well as UCNW staff and management, of incidents, safety concerns and other related issues.

Good Neighbor Policy

The Way Station partners are part of the local community and will work to keep the area surrounding the facility clean and thriving. Outreach to surrounding property owners and residents will be done prior to facility opening and will be ongoing thereafter. All inquiries and complaints will be logged and followed up on by leadership at The Way Station. Janitorial services at the facility will include nearby trash monitoring. Both the interior and exterior of the facility will have daily walk through to monitor for any needs pursuant to being a good neighbor. Any behavioral issues by guests at The Way Station will follow the attached protocol and staff will work with Bellingham Police Department and Emergency Services as appropriate to maintain a positive environment.

Food

Food will be provided for all three meals for Respite Program guests procured through contract with a

professional local vendor. Food will be warmed and served on site. Light snacks will be kept on hand for distribution by staff outside mealtimes as needed.

Smoking

A designated area will be marked at least 25 feet from the facility entrance for smoking.

Parking

Limited parking is available onsite for staff and, on rare occasions, The Way Station clients themselves.

Staff

Respite Program

The Opportunity Council will maintain two Respite Program staff on duty at all times of the day. Respite Program staff will include:

- Respite Program Supervisor
- Respite Counselor Leads
- Respite Counselors

Opportunity Council will contract with third parties for food, linen, and janitorial services.

Clinical and Hygiene Program

Unity Care NW will hire sufficient clinical and hygiene services staff to effectively operate at minimum 40 hours a week. Clinical and Hygiene Program staff will include:

- Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager
- Clinical Provider
- Medical Assistant
- Behavioral Health Counselor
- Case Managers
- Clinical and Hygiene Staff

Training

All staff at The Way Station will undergo an orientation which includes, but is not limited to, training in building emergency protocol, airborne and blood borne pathogen protocol, crisis prevention and intervention, de-escalation skills, and emergency response protocol.

Key Staff Roles	Area	Key Responsibilities
Clinical and Hygiene Manager	Clinical and Hygiene Program	Provision of on-site management and supervision of Clinical and Hygiene employees across services.
Case Manager	Clinical	Collaborates within an integrated care team that includes primary care providers, Behavioral Health Consultants (BHC), nurses, medical assistants, psychiatric providers, and/or other clinic staff in a primary care medical setting. Provides patient-centered case management support with a focus on reducing barriers to clinical care, addressing social determinants of health, and improving patient outcomes and overall health.
Clinician	Clinical	Provides high quality, comprehensive, primary care services in a multi-specialty community health center.
Medical Assistant	Clinical	Assists in daily patient management and is part of a multidisciplinary patient care team providing and coordinating medical care in an outpatient setting following a patient-centered, primary care model.
Counselor	Clinical	Provides outpatient, comprehensive Behavioral Health counseling services, case management, crisis stabilization, suicide risk assessment, treatment planning, and may lead group sessions. In addition, counselors will provide referrals and coordination with medication providers, primary physicians, and other community agencies.
Hygiene Facilities Staff	Hygiene Services	Greets guests accessing hygiene services (showers, laundry, and restrooms). Oversees schedule of operations and maintains cleanliness of facilities between each use. Restocking of supplies.
Respite Supervisor Counselor & Respite Counselors	Respite	Provision of 24/7 site management. Respite counselor role is responsible for checking in new respite guests, overseeing daily activities in the respite program, and facilitating client needs. An essential responsibility is the monitoring and encouraging of client participation in health activities (e.g. facilitating transportation to and from follow-up specialty

		healthcare visits, ensuring access for visiting home health professionals to the facility, meals, and clients remembering to take their medications).
Housing Systems Support Staff	Respite & Hygiene Programs	Provides information and referral services to guests, functioning as an access point to the homeless housing system (Coordinated Entry), as well as facilitating relationship building with the greater Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).

Building maintenance and Janitorial Services

Whatcom County as the building owner, and The Way Station as the lease holder, will jointly provide building maintenance. Janitorial services will be contracted by a local professional company.

Provision of services and referrals

Respite Program

The Way Station Respite Program will operate as recuperative facility for patients without safe housing being discharged from PeaceHealth St Joseph's Medical Center. PeaceHealth and Opportunity Council will have an established referral mechanism that ensures guest, staff, and community safety.

For accepted referrals for recuperative stays in the Respite program, guests will sign an agreement explaining the expected code of conduct. No one will be discriminated against based on religious preference, race, nationality, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Clinical and Hygiene Program

The Way Station Clinical and Hygiene programs will operate during set business hours and days and be available to anyone in need. Showers and laundry facilities will be provided on a walk-in basis to visitors and loose appointments will be available in order of service request. Staff will maintain a list of visitors and ensure timely use of facilities to allow for maximum use. Medical and behavioral health services will also be available on a walk-in basis and offer appointments if requested. Hygiene visitors will be offered access to clinical services including case management.

All Programs

In accordance with The Way Station's commitment to the safety of the neighboring community, a contract outlines a code of conduct for all clients of The Way Station, whether they are guests in the Respite Program or visitors to the Clinical and Hygiene Program. Clients are prohibited from the sale, distribution, and/or use of non-prescribed drugs and alcohol while on site. Knives and firearms will not be allowed. Items that are otherwise deemed weapons will be required to be checked with staff in a locked room while clients are on premises. Staff will use discretion in the interpretation of what could be used as a weapon.

Physical and verbal aggression will not be tolerated. Attempts will be made to de-escalate clients and separate those experiencing conflict through the respite screening process. A protocol will be put in place for staff to respond to emergencies as needed.

Staff will perform regular rounds to ensure safety and comfort of all clients throughout the day and

will log observations and interactions in a secure database. These will be combined with progress notes from visiting clinicians to establish a clear picture of the Respite Program guests' stay.

Recordkeeping

All staff at The Way Station will maintain appropriate databases as a method of daily internal communication, including a HIPAA compliant electronic medical record to track patient care and outcomes. Referrals, intakes, care plans and other guest data will be stored in HIPAA compliant servers. Staff meetings agendas and notes, where behavioral issues and safety concerns are discussed will also be retained. In addition, a database will be used to manage inventory ordering, laundry services, food delivery services and monitoring behavioral health and safety concerns. Community concerns or complaints will also be recorded.

Pathways to Services

As mentioned in the above table, Opportunity Council staff will make appropriate referrals to resources that help support clients' path toward housing. Clients will be encouraged to enroll in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) intake system for coordinated entry. Staff will also be able to check in clients already in coordinated entry and make connections to the Homeless Outreach Team, Housing Lab, Community Resource Center, GRACE/LEAD and other supportive and navigational services.

Unity Care NW (UCNW) case management staff will collaborate within an integrated care team that includes primary care providers, behavioral health consultants, nurses, medical assistants, psychiatric providers, and/or other clinic staff in a primary care medical setting. UCNW case management staff will provide patient-centered support with a focus on reducing barriers to clinical care, addressing social determinants of health, and improving patient outcomes and overall health. Case managers manage patient care using a team-based approach in their interactions with patients that works to achieve stated objectives and outcomes.

Outcomes

Guest health improvement and satisfaction are the guiding benchmark outcomes that all staff at The Way Station will be trained to support. Measurable outcomes include:

- Number of unique clients served by UCNW medical, behavioral health, case management and hygiene services (within HIPAA guidelines).
- Selected UCNW Clinical Program patient diagnoses, e.g., numbers of those presenting with body bugs or substance abuse disorders (within HIPAA guidelines).
- Number of Respite Program guests, reason for stay and length of stay (within HIPAA guidelines).
- Number of clients who are checked in or enrolled in Coordinated Entry for housing.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Way Station partners are dedicated to highlighting the strengths and skills of the populations it serves. Therefore, while The Way Station partners maintain a code of conduct for addressing behaviors that will not be tolerated, partners also hope to develop a system that foster behaviors that build community and promote self-sufficiency by reinforcing healthy behaviors.

Violence

Verbal abuse, threats, or property destruction will not be tolerated and may result in immediate removal and permanent termination of care.

Language or behavior that discriminates on the basis of race, nationality, gender, religion, or any type of prejudice will not be permitted. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated, and staff will respond within established policies.

If any guest or visitor is threatening or commits an act of violence towards staff, volunteers, or other clients, the person on-duty will call 911.

Weapons

Possession of firearms or knives is grounds for immediate expulsion from the facility. Items that are otherwise deemed weapons will be required to be checked into a designated staff area and will be returned when the client completes their stay or visit.

Substance Use

Substance use is prohibited on the premises. Clients entering the facility under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be held responsible for their behaviors.

Hours of Operations

Respite Program

The Way Station Respite Program is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. New referrals from PeaceHealth St Joseph's Medical Center will be accepted before 5 PM on weekdays.

Clinical and Hygiene Program

The Way Station Clinical and Hygiene program will be open during set business hours a minimum of 40 hours a week. Services will primarily be provided to walk in visitors on a first come first served basis.

Personal Belongings

Respite Program

Guests will be permitted to bring a limited number of belongings with them to the respite center that must fit under beds or in designated areas. Lost items will be stored in a lost-and-found for a week's time. If the guest does not claim their property in one week's time, they will be disposed of. Guests will be encouraged to help with general morning clean up duties in the food service area.

Clinical and Hygiene Program

Clients will be permitted to bring laundry into the facility. Clients' belongings are their responsibility and visitors will not be allowed to leave property at the facility unattended.

Showers and Laundry

Respite Program

Showers and washer and dryers are available for guests during their stay.

Clinical and Hygiene Program

Showers and washer and dryers are available for visitor use during business hours a minimum of 40 hours a week.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

FACILITIES CONTACT GUIDE

<u>EMERGENCY</u> CALL 911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Electrocutation • Intruder • Injury or medical crisis
<u>EMERGENCY</u> Call Whatcom County Contact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating failure • Flooding • All lights out in a space • Interruption of water service • Building damage or deficiency that renders facility unusable
<u>NON-EMERGENCY – SPECIALIZED</u> Leave message for Whatcom County contact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building damage or deficiency that <u>does not</u> render facility unusable
<u>NON-EMERGENCY – NON-SPECIALIZED</u> Attempt to mitigate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clogged toilet • Snow/ice on walkway

BELLINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT (BPD) COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Frequent Communication

Regular communication will be promoted between The Way Station management and the BPD. Staff will be encouraged to bring up safety and security issues at weekly staff meetings so we can help troubleshoot or answer questions.

Law enforcement or ICE

If a Law Enforcement or ICE officer comes to The Way Station seeking a person(s), staff will ask them to produce a warrant which has the suspect's name and is signed by a judge.

- If they do have a warrant, we will ask that they allow us to have a look at our guest list to verify that the suspect is staying with us and request the person meet the law enforcement officer outside of the shelter.
- If law enforcement or ICE do not honor this process, staff will contact the Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager or Respite Program Supervisor immediately.

Phone calls

The BPD and the public will have access to The Way Station number (TBD). It is the responsibility of staff on duty to answer the phone. If staff cannot get to the phone because staff is helping a guest, staff will check voicemail at the earliest opportunity.

- If the BPD has called, please call them back as soon as possible.
- If staff have a message from a member of the community, they will write down the name, number, and message on a call log, and the Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager or Respite Program Supervisor will call them back

EMERGENCY PLAN and BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

The Way Station partners strive to respond to crisis and behavioral issues in a compassionate way. Staff will be trained in de-escalation techniques and recognizing both trauma triggers and responses.

Staff are responsible to ensure a safe and healing environment. If staff observe a situation that looks like it may potentially become unsafe:

- **First** assess the overall safety of the guests and staff. If a situation looks like it may become unsafe, ask other guests or staff to move away so that they are out of danger.
- **Then** Staff will follow a protocol which includes the following:

If this happens...	Then...
If a guest is verbally aggressive...	Attempt to step outside and review the code of conduct with the guest. If the guest continues to remain verbally aggressive, call Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager or Respite Program Supervisor, to determine whether the guest should be immediately barred from clinical, hygiene, or respite services or given alternative sleeping arrangements.
If a guest is overtly physically aggressive...	Call 911. Once the guest has been removed, take notes and notify the Clinical and Hygiene Manager or Respite Program Supervisor.
If a guest is clearly intoxicated and continuing to be disruptive...	Call 911 and request transport to Detox. The dispatcher will let you know if there is space in the Detox facility and will transport the guest if necessary.
If a guest is acting in a sexually inappropriate manner...	Call the Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager or Respite Program Supervisor to determine whether the guest should be immediately barred or given alternative sleeping arrangements.
If a guest leaves or is asked to leave the facility, and you believe they are a threat to themselves or the community...	Call 911.
In the event of a fire/emergency...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, call 911.• If fire is small attempt to extinguish with the nearest fire extinguisher.• If unsuccessful, pull the fire alarm.• In an evacuation, all guests should meet in the Champion Street parking lot. A head count should be performed to determine whether everyone is out of the facility.

<p>If someone who is not a guest is trying to enter The Way Station...</p>	<p>First, tell the person that they are not allowed and ask them to leave.</p> <p>If they refuse to leave, call 911.</p>
<p>If someone who is not a guest calls or comes to the respite center and asks if a specific person is staying there...</p>	<p>Ask the person for their name. Consult the guest agreement and see if the guest has given prior written permission to tell that person if she is staying at the facility. If yes, you can let them know.</p> <p>If not, tell them you cannot confirm or deny if the guest is there, but you can ask the person for their contact information and give it to the guest (if they are staying there).</p>
<p>If a member of the media shows up unannounced...</p>	<p>Contact Clinical and Hygiene Program Manager or Respite Program Supervisor. Members of the media not allowed without prior approval.</p>

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Respite Guest Agreement

Respite Guest Agreement DRAFT

Print Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

I agree to the following Respite Center policies:

- I will respect the rights of all others while I am at the facility.
- I will not use or sell drugs or alcohol while I am on the premises.
- I will only smoke in the designated smoking area outside of the building.
- My smoke break will not exceed 10 minutes.
- I will check in all weapons when I arrive to the Respite facility and collect them upon my departure.
- I will keep all my belongings in the designated area behind or under my bed.
- If I am asked to leave, I will do so promptly.
- I will not bring more than two bags, which I can carry with me, to the facility. *(Reasonable accommodations can be made for those with disabilities.)*.
- I will be quiet during lights-out hours (10:30 pm to 6:30 am).

I understand that any violation of the code of conduct may result in my being barred from the Respite Center for a predetermined amount of time: ____ (initial)

I carry a weapon on myself for protection:

Yes / No (circle one) Type of weapon: _____

Are you required to register as a sex offender?

Yes / No (circle one)

Do you have a current felony warrant for your arrest?

Yes / No (circle one)

If someone contacts the respite center and asks if you are staying here, is it okay to tell them you are here?

Yes / No (circle one) Name of a specific person we can tell: _____

Is there a person you would like us to contact in case of an emergency?

Name: _____ Number: _____

I understand that by staying at the Respite Program I am agreeing that a sex offender or warrant check may be performed, upon request by law enforcement officer. ____ (initial)

Signature: _____ Date: _____