



**Village of Arlington Heights
Department Comments, Round 2
Shelter, Inc. Response – August 30, 2021
Updated September 17, 2021**

Shelter, Inc. is pleased to provide the following response to the Department Plan Review regarding its Transitional Living Program proposal at 207 – 209 East Valley Lane. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you on this project.

Arlington Heights Fire Department

1. Shelter, Inc. agrees to install a Knox Box with appropriate keys so that the Arlington Heights Fire Department can gain access, if need.

Planning and Community Development Department

28. Modifications will be made to accommodate for the office area and a common area. Staff is required to check in/check out with staff any time they leave the property. They will not be allowed to use the front door and will be required to use the side entrance, walking past the staff office. The staff office will also be expanded to include more windows to allow for a greater range of vision of residents as they enter/leave the property. All doors will be outfitted with security systems and cameras so as to notify staff if a resident leaves without prior approval.

Security cameras would allow for both live viewing and recording. Currently in our Boys' Group Home, security cameras can record and store up to one week of footage.

Attached please find an updated floor plan that includes the location of the staff office, common and storage areas, and security cameras.

29. An updated floor plan will be sent in a subsequent email.
31. The post-secondary school does not pay for transportation under the McKinney-Vento Act. For residents who are participating in college or other secondary education, they are allotted money towards transportation needs. They can request that money on a Ventra card or in cash to use towards Lyft/Uber services. The Ventra card can be used for the busses as well as the PACE call a ride (which works directly with Harper students); they are also eligible for an additional transportation stipend from DCFS if in college.



32. Shelter Inc. is committed to upholding the utmost safety standards for all of our programs. We are pleased to expand on that commitment as it relates to calls to the Arlington Heights Police Department:
- The program's qualified and state-accredited staff closely monitors all participants and enforces strict behavioral requirements. For example, staff enforces a midnight curfew, and any young people not back by the required time are immediately reported to DCFS.
 - We have 24-hour supervision of the home by trained staff. One staff per six residents is required at a minimum. There are three shifts, and each staff person must be awake during their shift. There are hourly checks overnight and the home will be outfitted with security cameras. Residents are allowed to leave for work/school or to visit friends/family, but they must sign out and staff must be able to contact them.
 - The fact that there have been police calls to our existing TLP home proves just how safe we are. We take no chances with the safety of our young people, our neighbors, and our community. We enforce strict behavioral requirements for our participants, and any young people who do not comply are immediately reported to DCFS and oftentimes the local police. We also take the health and wellbeing of our young people seriously, especially since many of the participants in our program have faced significant trauma such as abuse, neglect, and homelessness. Roughly 90% of our police calls have been for curfew violations, mental health checks and other non-criminal reasons.
 - Over the past 5 years, we have worked to make our program and neighborhood even safer by implementing enhanced screening and proactive accountability measures for the young people residing at the home. As a result, police calls to the TLP home have been reduced 75% the past 5 years. In fact, criminal calls to the Circle Hill Apartments down the street have been 66% higher than the TLP.
 - Our enhanced screening and proactive accountability measures included more specific questions regarding legal/criminal involvement, on probation/parole, aggression, gang involvement, sexually problematic behaviors, and if they have to been registered on the sex offender registry (either juvenile or adult). We get additional details regarding mental health diagnosis and history, prescribed medications, compliance with the medications through incident reports, and willingness



to comply with the medications if accepted to the program. In addition, Shelter Clinical staff now has access to each potential resident's State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) case file to look at case notes, incident reports, historic service plans, integrated assessments, etc. prior to the interview. Current caseworkers send any psychological reports, therapy reports, psychiatric reports, school reports, etc. or any other reports that cannot be located in the SACWIS system. By looking at the past incident reports in SACWIS, we then are given a pretty good indication as to history of physical/verbal aggression, property damage, police involvement, peer and staff relations, etc. Shelter can refuse to accept any referral that does not fit the safety standards for this program. When we see incidents for aggression towards staff, property damage, sex offences, violent offences, or poor relationships with peers, we decline them.

- Since 2016, we have only had 74 calls.

2016	2	2019	18
2017	4	2020	35*
2018	14	2021	1

* An increase in calls was due to one resident who had increased mental health needs. Since we were unable to provide the most appropriate services for this resident, they are no longer in our program.

- We have not had to call the police on any of our current residents. These are not violent juvenile offenders (they go through a very extensive screening process before they are allowed in the home.) They are young people who have been let down by the adults in their lives; they are not in this program because of anything they have done. And curfew calls are just that, calls. The police are not coming out to the home.
- Over time, we noticed an increased need for mental health services; however, those services were met with many barriers. Since the residents' healthcare is covered by Medicaid, and providers who accept Medicaid in the suburbs is limited, residents either had to travel to other cities (Oak Park, Evanston, Chicago) or wait up to 18 months for services. Seeing this need for increased support, we started our own Clinical Program so that we can provide mental health services onsite. Over the past year, we have been able to increase case management and start both group and one-on-one therapy sessions with all the residents.



Updated September 17, 2021

Arlington Heights Police Department

6. General Comments:

All Emergency Contact forms will be made available to the Village of Arlington Heights and will be updated as needed. Shelter will establish additional points of contact as needed to ensure emergency notifications are routed to appropriate staff at all times.

A minimum of 1:6 staff to resident ratio is maintained at all times. Shelter is required by DCFS to maintain the 1:6 staff to resident ratio and the staff are awake at all times, even during overnight shifts. If we do not maintain this ratio, Shelter will lose its license and funding from DCFS and the program would be shut down. Additionally, DCFS mandates that all of the staff must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, go through extensive training (including 40 hours of on the job training), a criminal background check, mandated crisis and trauma training, and they are all CPR and First Aid certified.

Shelter's new Clinical program now allows us to provide on-site mental health services on a regular basis and during crisis situations. This staff includes two licensed clinical therapists and two master's level social workers. By having its own Clinical program, we have removed the barriers to residents receiving appropriate mental and behavioral health care resources as our staff is available to them at all times.

Thank you for your consideration. We are happy to supply you with any additional information and we look forward to working with you.