

Foster Alum Focus Group

September 8, 2017

Population: emancipated foster youth

Goal: Housing “set aside”, Foster Scholar House

What will this house look like?

- Similar to Scholar House I and II
 - 1 Bedroom individual apartments
 - 3 or 4 stories with basement
 - Approximately 25 units
 - Located on a bus line
1. Housing Design
 - Apartment
 - i. Around 525 square foot units
 - ii. Needs to be furnished
 1. IKEA provides grants to furnish up to 30 units
 - iii. Bed
 1. Murphy bed
 2. Bed bug mattress cover
 - iv. Built-in desk in living space (not bedroom)
 - v. Kitchen Counter with stools
 - vi. Bigger closet instead of a dresser with shelving
 - vii. Electric Stove
 - viii. Washer/dryer in unit
 - ix. Dishwasher, garbage disposal
 1. Property manager can help with maintenance
 - x. USB plugs in outlets
 - xi. Vinyl plank flooring
 - xii. Utility Allowance
 1. Learn to pay bills
 2. Utilize IDA (Individual Development Accounts) for this purpose?
 - xiii. No additional storage will be available
 - xiv. Have a Welcome Package with cleaning supplies, cooking supplies, etc.
 - Will need a parking variance
 - i. Only anticipate needing 10 parking spots
 1. Utilize IDA to work toward car ownership
 - Bicycle use
 - i. Store bicycles inside vs. outside
 - ii. Covers bike cage or storage locker outside
 - Unclear if an elevator will be required
 - Probably will not have patios
 - i. If there are patios, no grills will be allowed
 - Building will have wi-fi
 - Security
 - i. Building will have door fob

1. \$5 to replace fob
 - ii. Apartment doors will have keyholes
 - iii. Security cameras will be located on porches, outside premises, etc.
 1. Explain to all tenants that this is standard security protocol for any dorms
 - Community Room
 - i. Common space currently has 10% of building cap (including hallways), asking for a waiver from OHFA
 - ii. Utilized to meet, hang out, check in
 - iii. Could be in basement, or maybe a small area on each floor
 - iv. Look into having a kitchen in the community room as well
 - v. Bookshelf for book sharing
 - All CMHA properties are non-smoking
 - Two offices on-site
 - i. one for system navigator
 - ii. one for any on-site services provided
 - Workout room
 - Computer lab
2. Services
- On-site services provided certain days/times
 - i. Counseling (don't call it "behavioral health", call it support/counseling)
 - ii. Financial literacy (budgeting) Empowerment
 1. IDA's
 2. CMHA has Family Self-Sufficiency and Home Ownership programs
 3. Have banks come on-site
 - iii. Medical insights (i.e. insulin)
 - iv. Tutoring
 - v. Have some scholarships available?
 - vi. Teach how to cook, clean (utilize the community room kitchen for classes)
 - vii. Possible Partners:
 1. United Healthcare (their VP serves on board of My Very Own Blanket)
 2. Partner with My Very Own Blanket
 3. Partner with FYAC (Capital Law School's Foster Youth Advocacy Clinic)
 4. Star House
 - viii. Service Navigator
 1. May not be in the house, but on-call by phone 24/7
 - ix. 3 Resident Advisors (prioritize former fosters)
 1. Provide them with free rent (vs. 30% of income like other residents)
 2. Could RA's receive a stipend like AmeriCorps or partner with AmeriCorps for a grant?
 3. Possibly offer them the two bedroom units on site
 4. Ohio Campus Compact, Ohio Serve Conference in October
 5. RA will be well-versed in services/resources, include subtle support services
 6. Who will train and support them?
 7. They should be a Peer Mentor, therefore need to be in a good place
 8. Must be offered leadership opportunities

9. Fosters can be “fixers” at the own expense, so they will need boundaries. “When helping you is hurting me”
10. Recognize that you can learn from each other during crisis, or it can have a negative ripple effect
 - a. Therefore, social worker support and mental health support needs to be provided

3. Program Structure and Environment

- Create Resident guidebook with expectations, etc.
- Permanency Pact
- RA’s heavily used to help residents connect to services and plant seeds of wisdom/knowledge to infuse as other areas as well
- Build camaraderie, accountability, rapport
- Creative ways to create community
- “People come if you feed them”; provide food as incentive at meetings
 - i. Get food donations? i.e. church ladies
- Regular check-ins with RA
 - i. Flexibility RE: weekly/biweekly if call-in
- Current Scholar House has a Peer Support structure
 - i. Replicate this structure to create sense of community
 - ii. They require weekly mandated meetings, offer at two different times to accommodate schedules
- Current Scholars often keep their doors open so they can hang out with each other
- Create a culture where people know and reinforce the structure
- Have a “Wall of Fame” of Alumni
- Explain the “why” & frame things like the security cameras
- Have transition plan if someone gets pregnant
 - i. Give them priority at Scholar House I and II
- Regular site checks (not the RA)
- Provide a robust menu of service to meet resident needs
 - i. Can provide services but not mandate them
 1. RA helps encourage utilizing services

4. Requirement Criteria

- Tenant Selection Plan
- Look at current Scholar House requirements
- Look at HUD-FASH requirements
- Minimum GPA?
- Minimum credit?
- Letter from academic advisor
- Prefer full time students, but acknowledge that some students must drop classes to preserve financial aid.
- Do not require students to go to school during the summer
 - i. Encourage them to work, save, create nest egg, utilize IDA’s
 - ii. Create partnerships with agencies that can provide internships
 - iii. Summer workstudy’s eat into financial aid
 - iv. CCMEP- Franklin County
- Leases are typically one year, month-to-month following
- Allow 6 month stay after graduation

5. Resources

- Research by Eileen McCaffrey RE: Foster Care to Success
- Education Training Voucher
- Pell Grant
- Permanency Pact
- Benefits Cliff
- HUD-FASH