

The Sharehouse Warehouse Policies and Guidelines

January 2011

The Sharehouse serves as a centralized collection and distribution center for household furniture and other goods for families and individuals who have been homeless and are transitioning into permanent housing. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday The Sharehouse crew is out picking up donated items to stock our warehouse. We also receive donations on the same days, plus every second and fourth Saturday mornings. Check www.thesharehouse.org for complete information on donating furniture and household goods.

The Sharehouse works hard to have a selection of household furniture and other items in good condition for clients. Following are policies and guidelines for accessing The Sharehouse. Our goal is to provide the information you need to access The Sharehouse effectively. Each agency receives a **newly revised version** of these policies and guidelines at renewal time each January. **They should be distributed to every staff member who comes to the Sharehouse and older versions destroyed or archived.** All such staff should be familiar with them so that appointments can be most productive.

General Information:

- **The Sharehouse has always depended on its member agencies to ensure that the clients they bring are qualified for services. The Sharehouse exists to serve families and individuals who have been homeless by the HUD definition. Please ensure that you are making appointments for these people only.**
- **The Sharehouse is intended as one-time assistance as people are returning to permanent housing. Clients are entitled to 2 successful appointments within 6 months of being homeless. The Sharehouse is not intended as an ongoing resource.**
- **Please help us ensure that our very limited resources get to those who need them most by bringing clients who genuinely need furniture and other household items.**
- The Sharehouse is open for shopping each Tuesday and Thursday by appointment only.
- Our office is open Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Clients never pay for items received at The Sharehouse.
- Acceptance of items from The Sharehouse means that they will be used by the client and not resold.
- All items are taken ‘as is’ and no warranty or guarantee is given or implied.
- Appointments are 30 minutes long and are scheduled beginning at 9:00 am.
- The doors open at 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday.
- The Sharehouse reserves the right to decline service to any client or agency staff member behaving inappropriately, especially exhibiting abusive language or behavior.
- The Sharehouse closes for lunch on Tuesday and Thursday between 11:45 am and 12:30 pm. The door is unlocked at 12:25 pm.
- Each member agency is allowed one appointment per week at The Sharehouse. Two case workers (or other staff) may come to each appointment and each case manager may bring up to two households.

- Please call The Sharehouse if you want to arrange to bring additional staff to any appointment to observe or for any other reason. We welcome interpreters and helpers of people with disabilities. Please be aware that helpers and observers are asked to fulfill those functions and are not allowed to help clients shop.
- The Sharehouse is a difficult place for children. We understand that childcare may present a challenge to parents, but if it is possible please do not bring children to The Sharehouse appointments. If you must bring children, we ask that an adult is available to supervise them in our waiting room while parents are shopping, or keep them by the hand in our warehouse. **The warehouse is not a safe place for children.** Unsupervised children or children behaving inappropriately may result in the appointment being cut short.

Scheduling Appointments:

- Each member agency is allowed one appointment per week. Each 30-minute appointment has room for 2 case workers, each of whom can bring up to 2 households. There must be 1 case worker for every 2 households.
- Member agencies designate two staff members who are authorized to make appointments at The Sharehouse. **Only these 2 people may make appointments.**
- Morning appointments can be made by calling on Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. **only.** Morning appointments are made on a first come, first served basis, and are generally scheduled 2 weeks out. **Do not leave voice mail in hopes of scheduling a morning appointment – we will not call you back and you will lose your chance to make a morning appointment.**
- We determine our start time by using www.time.gov. We do not answer the phone between 9:45 and 10:00 a.m. on Mondays.
- Agencies may schedule **afternoon appointments at any time.**
- Schedulers should be prepared to give us their program number, the first names of the case workers coming to the appointment and the number of households each will be bringing or shopping for.
- **Please do not ask staff other than authorized schedulers to make Sharehouse appointments without speaking with Sharehouse office staff first. We are happy to help you arrange for someone to schedule for an authorized scheduler if necessary, but are unable to schedule for any one not authorized to do so.**
- The day before each appointment, The Sharehouse staff will call the person who scheduled each appointment to confirm. Schedulers are expected to pass on the confirmation to the appropriate case managers and instruct them to call if they intend to cancel.

Keeping Appointments:

- Please call to cancel if you are unable to attend your appointment.
- Case workers **or** schedulers may call to cancel. When 2 case workers are scheduled to come, Sharehouse staff will ask if the case worker is cancelling just for him/herself or for both. Please do not cancel for a second case manager unless you are **certain** that person wants to cancel.
- After 2 appointments during which case workers do not appear and no cancellation call is received before the appointment begins, the member agency **will be charged** for no-show appointments at the regular flat rate established each year at renewal time.
- The Sharehouse does not charge for a client no-show, for an unsuccessful appointment or for a late appointment.
- Like clients, case workers may be up to 15 minutes late for an appointment. However, the appointment will end at the appointed time, regardless of when the case worker arrived. **Clients are not allowed to enter the warehouse without a case worker.**

Inventory:

- The Sharehouse picks up donations and receives them at our warehouse 3 days a week. In addition, donations are received at the warehouse every 2nd and 4th Saturday mornings. Items come from businesses and residential donors in most parts of King County.
- Because items are donated, stock varies - sometimes greatly. The Sharehouse cannot guarantee that items will always be in stock.
- Every attempt is made to inform case workers with appointments if stock is short of certain items. Calls are made to the authorized scheduler who made the appointment, who is expected to contact case workers scheduled to come. A cancellation call must still be made to The Sharehouse if case workers decide not to come.
- Case workers are welcome to call prior to an appointment to check to see if specific items are available. Please call as close to the appointment time as possible to receive as accurate information as possible. The Sharehouse does not keep lists of inventory, and this service is intended only for instances where certain specific items are needed.
- Each recipient is entitled to 2 successful visits to The Sharehouse within 6 months of the period of homelessness. Clients are **not** entitled to 2 appointments a year. The Sharehouse is intended to be a one time service as people are transitioning out of homelessness.
- Limits on the number of items in each category apply to all recipients. Limits may be adjusted **only** at the discretion of the Operations Manager.
- Items with 'hold tags' taped to them are not available, regardless of the date on the item. Items which appear to be 'expired' are probably scheduled for delivery. **Any case worker or client removing hold tags will be escorted out of The Sharehouse, will not be allowed to continue shopping, and will not be allowed to have any item already chosen. Any second incident will result in a lifetime ban from The Sharehouse. No exceptions will be made to this rule under any circumstances.**

Shopping:

- Each appointment is 30 minutes long.
- Case workers and clients are allowed to be up to 15 minutes late for an appointment. After 15 minutes, the appointment must be rescheduled. Appointments cannot be extended because case workers or clients are late.
- Any item with a hold tag is not available, regardless of the date on the hold tag. Removing hold tags may result in a lifetime ban from The Sharehouse.
- Case workers must accompany clients into the warehouse.
- Each case worker may bring up to 2 clients to shop per appointment.
- Each agency may send up to 2 case workers to each appointment.
- Case workers are responsible for ensuring clients' appropriate behavior while in the warehouse.
- Only one member of a household may go into the warehouse to shop. The only exception to this rule applies to households with a person with a disability or lack of English. There are no other exceptions.
- Limits on items apply except at the discretion of The Sharehouse Operations Manager.
- In winter months, the warehouse is very cold. Case workers and clients are advised to dress accordingly.
- Because inventory varies, clients are strongly advised **NOT** to rent trucks before their Sharehouse appointments.

Children at The Sharehouse:

- The Sharehouse is a difficult place for children. If at all possible, children should not be brought to The Sharehouse.
- If children must accompany parents, one adult must remain in the waiting room with them.
- If children under 12 must go in the warehouse, they must be in a carrier or stroller or must be held by the hand by an adult **at all times**.
- Unsupervised or disruptive children may make it necessary for The Sharehouse to cut short the appointment.

Case Workers Are Expected To:

- Ensure that only eligible clients who genuinely need furniture and household items come to The Sharehouse from their agencies.
- Accompany clients to and during their appointments at The Sharehouse.
- Arrive on time. Every case manager is allowed a 15 minute grace period, but clients are not allowed to shop until the case worker arrives.
- Understand and follow The Sharehouse policies, guidelines and procedures at all times.
- Ensure that clients understand The Sharehouse guidelines, procedures and limitations before their appointment. (The last page of this document is designed to be used as a handout for clients.)

- Complete and sign a Distribution Receipt for each household accurately. (Instructions are on Page 8).
- Complete a United Way demographics sample form for at least 1 household at each appointment.
- Complete hold slips for each item held for pick up or delivery. (Instructions are on Page 8).
- Monitor and ensure appropriate behavior in the waiting room and warehouse. The Sharehouse does not tolerate physical or verbal abuse.
- If cancelling a Sharehouse appointment, ensure that clients are notified of the cancellation.
- If emergency circumstances prevent a case worker from getting to a Sharehouse appointment and they were unable to notify clients, alert the Sharehouse so that our staff can explain to the clients.

Picking Up Items:

- Any items being left in the warehouse for future pick-up or delivery must have the white copy of a hold slip visible and securely fastened to the item.
- The Sharehouse holds items for one week only, and limits pick-up times to Tuesday and Thursday only. Pick-up times are listed on the yellow copy of the hold slip. Pick-ups may only be done within those times. **Please remember that The Sharehouse is closed for lunch between 11:45 noon and 12:30 p.m. and time your pick-up accordingly.**
- The yellow slip must be presented to us when items are picked up. The Sharehouse does not release items for pick-up without the yellow slips.
- The expiration date is one week after the appointment and is listed on the Distribution Receipt. Extensions are not given except when dire emergencies (hospitalization or a death in the family) make it impossible for pick up to be done within the one-week time frame. **No other exceptions will be made.**
- When picking up items, come prepared to load and secure the load. Sharehouse crew are not always available to load items being picked up.
- **The Sharehouse will not tie items on top of a vehicle, will not assist clients or agency personnel in doing so, and will not provide rope for this purpose. This is a very dangerous way to transport items, and The Sharehouse strongly discourages it.**
- No additional shopping or exchanging of items may be done when picking up items from an appointment.

Delivery Service:

- The Sharehouse offers delivery service within King County, except on Vashon Island.
- The fee for delivery is \$30 per household per appointment, **payable when the delivery is scheduled.** No C.O.D.'s are allowed.
- The Sharehouse accepts cash, money order, agency check or agency credit card.
- Deliveries are made on Tuesday for residences north of I-90 and Thursday south of I-90. No exceptions are possible.

- Recipients are asked to have their correct address and phone number to schedule a delivery.
- Case workers are asked to provide a phone number as a back-up.
- The Sharehouse will not schedule a delivery without correct information from recipient or case worker or without payment or yellow slips.
- As a rule, deliveries are made about 2 weeks from the time of the appointment. Once a delivery is scheduled, items are held until delivery.
- Deliveries are scheduled to a 30 minute time frame. Calls are made the afternoon before the delivery date to let each recipient know what time the delivery is scheduled. The Sharehouse gives a 30-minute time frame for delivery.
- Deliveries may be scheduled and paid for **during the week that items are held**. Case workers or recipients may come to schedule and pay for a delivery Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Yellow slips are given to Sharehouse staff when scheduling a delivery. The same expiration date applies as for items being held for pick-up. **The delivery fee must be paid when delivery is scheduled.**
- The Sharehouse does not release items for pick-up once they have been scheduled for delivery. If recipients or agencies want to try to arrange pick-up, do not schedule a delivery until you know for sure. A delivery can be scheduled any time within the week that items are held.
- Recipients are expected to be available to receive items. The Sharehouse will not deliver if no one is home or if no prior arrangements have been made for someone else to receive items.
- If a recipient is not at home or does not respond, the delivery crew will wait only until the end of the 30-minute delivery window. At the end of that time, items will be returned to our warehouse and the delivery rescheduled.
- A missed delivery will be rescheduled **one time and one time only**. If the recipient is not available to accept delivery a second time, The Sharehouse will not reschedule the delivery.
- The \$30 fee is non-refundable.
- Agencies wishing to prepay for delivery should contact The Sharehouse Office Manager at 206.767.5280.
- A receipt is always issued at the time of payment.

Inclement Weather:

In order to maintain safety for member agency staff, clients and The Sharehouse staff, the following inclement weather policy is implemented effective January 1, 2010.

- If the Seattle School District is closed due to inclement weather, The Sharehouse is closed as well.
- The Sharehouse will change its outgoing message to reflect any emergency closures and will make every possible attempt to contact member agencies with appointments on the day.
- Please call The Sharehouse if you are uncertain we are open or not.
- In the event of inclement weather closure, The Sharehouse will reschedule deliveries and donation pickups in the order they were originally scheduled and as quickly as possible.

- The Sharehouse will call delivery recipients and donors with new information as soon as possible.

Using the Sharehouse to Furnish Member Agency Facilities:

- Based on availability, member agencies in good standing at The Sharehouse may receive donated furniture for use in their facilities.
- Agencies may use one (1) regular client appointment for this purpose, but no more often than once a month. Clients should always be given top priority when scheduling appointments for this purpose.
- Agencies may provide The Sharehouse with a list of needed items and Sharehouse staff will notify the agency as items become available. The Sharehouse will notify agencies about the availability of items requested. Lists may be brought to The Sharehouse, faxed to 206.767.5855 or emailed to sharehouseinfo@thechurchcouncil.org Be sure to include the primary contact and contact information.
- The same limits on items apply when shopping for a facility.
- In some cases, The Sharehouse may refer donors directly to member agencies when The Sharehouse is unable to pick up offered donations in time. The Sharehouse does not do this without checking with the member agency.
- Agencies are responsible for picking up items. The same one week time-frame applies as regular holds.
- Agencies may negotiate a delivery with The Sharehouse on its regular delivery route. Again, client deliveries have priority. The same \$30 delivery fee applies.

Bedbugs:

The Sharehouse is inspected weekly for bedbugs in our donations, trucks and offices. Any items found to have bedbugs are treated and isolated for re-inspection or disposed of immediately. Please help us by ensuring that all facilities where you house clients are aware of our protocols. Inspection reports are available in The Sharehouse director's office.

Distribution Receipts:

- Distribution receipts are printed for each case worker named for an appointment.
- Please complete 1 distribution receipt for **each household** you are shopping with.
- We print a case worker's name on each Distribution Receipt. If you are replacing that case worker, simply cross out the name and replace it with yours.
- The date, time, program number, expiration date and program or agency name are all printed on the Distribution Receipt.
- Please put the number of items each client receives in each category, noting the limits on some categories.
- Where no limits are noted, clients may have as much as they need, based on availability. However, some limits may be imposed from time to time at the Operations Manager's discretion.

- Each household may receive a box to fill with smaller items. You are asked to record ‘cases’ as a box approximately 16”x12” by 12” deep. Please estimate the number of cases based on this size, regardless of the size box you actually receive.
- Please be sure that small appliances get recorded in the appropriate category even if you have put them in a box.
- Ask warehouse staff for hygiene products or for other items if you do not see them.
- Every Sharehouse recipient is entitled to 2 successful appointments. A successful appointment is defined as one in which the client takes any item.
- If we do not have what the client is looking for, and the client wishes to not take anything so they can try again, please check the ‘unsuccessful’ option. There is no need to sign the receipt unless the appointment is successful.
- At the end of the appointment, sign and date the Distribution Receipt. Please ensure that the client understands that they accept items ‘as-is’ and that they agree not to sell items received from The Sharehouse.

Hold Slips:

- Any item not taken at the end of the appointment must have a ‘hold slip’ attached to it.
- The white copy goes on the item. The yellow copy must come back to us either when a delivery is scheduled, or when items are picked up.
- The information needed to complete hold slips is printed at the top of the Distribution Receipt.
- You will receive 2 hold slips on your clipboard. If you need more during your appointment, ask warehouse staff.
- Please write legibly and press hard enough for all 3 copies to be read clearly.
- Give enough detail for us to easily identify the items: Blue couch, or white queen mattress, for instance.
- Use enough masking tape to securely fasten the hold slip to the item chosen by your client.
- Yellow copies of the hold slips are given to Sharehouse office staff when scheduling a delivery. If the agency or the client will be returning to pick up items, the yellow copies must be returned to the Sharehouse when items are picked up.
- **The Sharehouse staff will not release items without the yellow copies of hold slips. There is no exception to this rule.**
- The times available for picking up items are listed at the bottom of the hold slip. No other times are possible.
- All hold slips expire at 4:30 p.m. one week after the appointment. If the appointment is on Tuesday the 15th of a month, the hold expires on Tuesday the 22nd of the month. The only possible exception to such a rule is a dire emergency such as hospitalization or death in the family, and at the discretion of Sharehouse staff. **No other exceptions are possible.**

For Sharehouse Recipients

The Sharehouse staff looks forward to meeting you at your scheduled appointment. Please read the following information carefully. If you have questions, please ask your case worker or advocate before visit.

1. Please be on time for your appointment. If you are 15 minutes or more late, we are not able to admit you and you will have to reschedule. There are no exceptions to this policy.
2. Your case worker or advocate will tell you how to find the Sharehouse. There are directions and a map on our website at www.thesharehouse.org. For bus routes and schedules, please contact Metro. The Sharehouse does not have bus information.
3. The Sharehouse opens its doors at 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. We are closed from 11:45 noon to 12:30 p.m. for lunch on Tuesday and Thursday. We re-open at 12:25 p.m.
4. All items at the Sharehouse have been donated, and availability varies. Everyone is allowed 2 *successful* appointments at the Sharehouse. If you are not finding what you are looking for, consider not taking anything so you make the most of your 2 visits.
5. All items you choose at the Sharehouse are ‘as-is’. We do everything we can to ensure that items in our warehouse are in good condition and work, but we do not guarantee or exchange items.
6. Shopping appointments can only be scheduled through your case manager or advocate. Please do not call the Sharehouse to schedule an appointment.
7. Any item with a ‘hold slip’ is not available. **Removing hold slips from items is the same as stealing and will result in a permanent ban from The Sharehouse. No exceptions.**
8. The Sharehouse will hold your items for 1 week following your appointment. For example, if your appointment is on Tuesday the 3rd of the month, your items will be held until 4:30 p.m. Tuesday the 10th of that month. **The Sharehouse cannot extend holds on items.**
9. You may pick up your items on Tuesday or Thursday **only** between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon or between 12:30 and 4:30 p.m. There are no exceptions to this policy.
10. You will not be allowed to shop or to exchange items when you come to pick up items you chose at your appointment.
11. The Sharehouse offers delivery service for a \$30 fee. Ask your case worker or advocate about our delivery policies. Please see The Sharehouse Office Manager after your appointment to schedule and pay for a delivery.
12. The Sharehouse is a difficult place for children. If at all possible, please arrange care for your children when you come to the Sharehouse. If you are unable to do so, there must be an adult to stay with the children in our waiting room.
13. Our warehouse is very cold during winter months. Please dress appropriately.
14. The Sharehouse does not tolerate physical or verbal abuse or harassment of any kind. Any one exhibiting such behavior will be asked to leave immediately.
15. Please take care to choose items of an appropriate size for your living space. We can not take back items which are too big for your space.