

# Have Mercy

## Interim Housing FAQ Sheet

**Does Have Mercy provide emergency shelter?** Yes. We provide emergency shelter in Montcalm, Ionia, and northern rural Kent County by utilizing local motels for those with nowhere else to sleep that night. We offer interim housing for people who need more time and assistance to solve their homelessness.

**What is interim housing?** Interim housing is a temporary in-house program that provides up to 90 days' shelter to homeless individuals and families. After intake, a bed or family unit is assigned and is assured for the duration of their stay.

**Is this an emergency shelter?** No. Emergency shelters operate very differently than interim housing. They have a nightly intake process until all beds are full. Everyone sleeps in an open environment and then must leave in the morning. A bed is never guaranteed. People can live there on a night-to-night basis for many years.

**Can I move in today?** Possibly, depending on timing, schedules and open beds/units. Most likely, you will receive at least one night of emergency shelter in a motel and have a follow up appointment with a case manager the next day.

**What happens at the appointment?** We'll go through all housing options you may have and do paperwork, including a background check. This is mandatory for all adults.

**Why do you require a background check?** Because our adult facility is mixed with males and females in a communal living environment, we need to guarantee the safety of everyone that stays there as well as the safety of the children at the family facility.

**Will my felonies disqualify me?** Not necessarily. We screen for violent and sexual felonies that may pose a threat to others in the adult or family facilities. Other felonies and misdemeanors usually do not have any effect on your eligibility.

**Can my significant other stay with me?** Yes. In the adult facility, we are limited to three rooms for couples. If those rooms are full, you may be split from your significant other and both will be assigned a bed in another section. If that happens you will be placed on a waitlist for a couple's room and moved when one opens.

**Can my kids stay with me?** Yes, if your children are homeless with you or you have split visitation, and they are under the age of 18.

**Can my kids come for visitation?** Yes, if you are staying in the family facility and your children are on your case. No, if you are staying in the adult facility. You must arrange to meet them elsewhere while you are staying there.

**What if I'm homeless with adult kids?** If everyone is over 18, you will be sheltered at the adult facility based on available male and female beds. You will not necessarily be roomed together. If you have older children and also have a child under 18, your family will be sheltered at the family facility.

**Can my pet come with me?** Usually yes. Your pet must be homeless with you at the time of intake. It must be safe to be around others, healthy, house trained, and not have fleas. We will help you with a vet visit if necessary. If your pet does not qualify to be with you, we can work to find a temporary safe place for them and reunite you and your pet when permanently housed.

**Can I have visitors?** No. For everyone's safety and privacy, guests are not allowed. However, others may pick you up or drop you off and you are free to have visits with case managers, probation officers, or counselors in the facility.

**Is food provided?** There are no prepared meals and you are responsible to cook for yourself. We bring in food from our pantry so there is always food available for those without a Bridge Card or money. Refrigerators are provided in each room for your personal food.

**Do I have to share a room?** Yes, unless the number of guests is low enough for you to have your own room. Careful thought is taken in considering who is roomed together to ensure compatibility.

**What can I bring with me?** You can have enough clothes and personal possessions to fill two plastic totes in your room. We have a small storage area and can store one large suitcase for you. We recommend you find a friend or family member to keep most of your possessions or rent a storage unit for large quantities of possessions. See the list What to Bring/What not to Bring for more details.

**Who has access to my things when I'm gone?** In the adult facility, you will be in a semi-private room with one (or more) roommate(s). You will be assigned a

personal locker and padlock for your valuables and any prescriptions. In both adult and family facilities, your room/unit will be routinely checked for cleanliness by staff and may be randomly searched for drugs and alcohol by staff and/or a police K9.

**What about Bed Bugs?** We heat treat your possessions to kill all pests and to prevent flea, roach and bed bug infestations. We have also taken extensive measures to prevent bed bugs in each room. We check for and treat head lice as necessary.

**Do I pay rent?** No. While you stay with us you do not pay rent to us, but you should be saving funds to move into your new home!

**Is there a curfew?** Yes, for the adult facility the doors are locked for the night at 11 pm. Each guest also needs to sign in for each night they are in residence.

**What happens if I am not there overnight?** Each guest has the option of two excused overnight absences. Absences longer than two nights or random unexcused absences will indicate you have somewhere else to stay and may result in discharge from the program and the loss of your bed.

**Can I be kicked out?** Yes. If you are found to have drugs, alcohol, or weapons on the property we will discharge you immediately. Other offenses, including but not limited to, threats of violence/actual violence to staff or other guests and malicious destruction of property will also lead to immediate discharge from the program.

**What if I work nights?** We promote a quiet atmosphere in the residential area as we do have people that work all shifts and need to sleep at different times. Cooking, dining and tv time are done on the lower floor.

**How long can I stay?** This is a 90-day program that is designed to help you get back to self-sufficiency and is broken into three 30-day increments. You must be actively working on your housing goals and consistently meeting with our housing specialist to qualify for an extension at 30 days and 60 days.

**Does my income or credit affect my stay?** No. However, they do affect your housing and they will be addressed in your housing plan and goals as you work toward self-sufficiency.

**Do you help with transportation?** Yes. If staff have the availability, we can help with transportation to medical and housing appointments and court dates.

**Can I do laundry?** Yes, in the adult facility you will have assigned laundry days. In

the family facility, we will exchange your bedding weekly with clean bedding, but you are responsible for your personal laundry.

**Do I have to work or volunteer?** Because idleness can lead to depression, our motto is “Everyone Works!” Your number one responsibility is to find housing. However, we expect you to either have a job, be looking for a job, find a place to volunteer, or help us keep the facility clean in your spare time.