

Confidentiality Policy

Coalition to Shelter and Support the Homeless (CSSH)

All information concerning clients, former clients, staff, volunteers, financial data, and business records of CSSH is confidential. "Confidential" means that you are free to talk about CSSH and about the program and your position, but you are not permitted to disclose clients' names or talk about them in ways that will make their identity known. No information may be released without appropriate authorization. This is a basic component of client care and business ethics. The board of directors, staff, and our clients rely on volunteer staff to conform to this rule of confidentiality.

CSSH expects you to respect the privacy of clients and to maintain their personal and financial information as confidential. All records dealing with specific clients must be treated as confidential. General information, policy statements or statistical material that is not identified with any individual or family is not classified as confidential. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information relating to other volunteers, in addition to clients.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in the termination of your volunteer status or other corrective action. This policy is intended to protect you as well as CSSH because in extreme cases, violations of this policy also may result in personal liability.

Rationale

Confidentiality is the preservation of privileged information. By necessity personal and private information is disclosed in a professional working relationship. Part of what you learn is necessary to provide services to the supplicant or client; other information is shared with the development of a helping, trusting relationship. Therefore, most information gained about the individual clients through an assignment is confidential in terms of law, and disclosure could make you legally liable. Disclosure could also damage your relationship with the client and make it difficult to help the person.

Before you begin your assignment as a volunteer, you should be aware of the laws and penalties for breaching confidentiality. Although the agency is liable for your acts within the scope of your duty, giving information to an unauthorized person could result in the agency's refusal to support you in the event of legal action. Violation of the state status regarding confidentiality of records is punishable upon conviction by fines or by imprisonment or by both.

Certification

I have read CSSH's policy on confidentiality and the Statement of Confidentiality presented above. I agree to abide by the requirements of the policy and inform the CSSH Board of Directors immediately if I believe any violation (unintentional or otherwise) of the policy has occurred. I understand that violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my service with CSSH.

Name _____
(please print)

Signature _____ Date _____

Acknowledgement of Confidentiality of Client Information

I agree to treat as confidential all information about clients or former clients and their families that I learn during the performance of my duties as volunteer, and I understand that it would be a violation of policy to disclose such information to anyone without checking first with the CSSH Board of Directors.

Name _____
(please print)

Signature _____ Date _____