

SAMPLE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

Between the Bakersfield Homeless Navigation Center and the community of Bakersfield

_____, which operates the Bakersfield Homeless Navigation Center (BHNC) located at _____, is a non-profit organization that provides comprehensive housing and supportive services for homeless and formerly homeless people in the City of Bakersfield. The goal of the BHNC is to provide a place that is safe and engaging while at the same time is not enabling of long-term homelessness.

1. Definitions

Community of Bakersfield - sometimes referred to herein as “community”, consists of residents, businesses and other community members who live, work, or visit the area.

Immediate neighborhood- residences and businesses roughly within a half-mile radius surrounding the BHNC.

Community Collaboration Partnership- the intentional, regular and ongoing communication between the community, City of Bakersfield, including, but not limited to, its Police, Code Enforcement, Development Services, and Fire Departments, the County of Kern and its Departments, other local Emergency Shelters and Homeless Non-Profits, Stakeholders, and BHNC staff. The interdependent dialogue between the listed agencies, departments and community will significantly increase BHNC’s ability to appropriately respond to clients who breach the BHNC’s Code of Conduct, set forth below, or are engaged in illegal activity within the immediate neighborhood and/or community.

2. Mutual Goals

All parties in this agreement share common goals, which include:

- a. Maintaining a peaceful, safe, and clean neighborhood and community.
- b. Sharing open and honest communication.
- c. Helping each other address concerns and solve problems.
- d. Offering public service for the benefit of the neighborhood and community. Respecting others and their properties.
- e. Being an active partner that works to help sustain the overall surroundings and economic environment of the immediate neighborhood. In order to accomplish these goals, all parties are united in support of the commitments described below.

3. Safety

Safety and security are essential for residents to live peacefully, free from harm, and for neighborhoods to remain desirable and attractive. In order to promote safety and security for all residents of the immediate neighborhood and community, BHNC Staff will:

- a. Ensure a BHNC contact is available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week to address community issues as they occur. This will provide connectivity between immediate neighborhood and community members and BHNC staff. All calls and resolutions will be documented. The 24/7 hotline number will be publicized.
- b. Promptly investigate all concerns regarding client behavior expressed by neighbors or community members.
- c. Establish a block watch program in conjunction with the neighbors, the Bakersfield Police Department and other neighboring business and residents.
- d. Prohibit clients from engaging in loitering, alcohol or drug use and pan handling within the immediate neighborhood and community.
- e. Strictly enforce the Code of Conduct/Behavior with all clients.
- f. Contact the Bakersfield Police or Fire Department immediately for all emergencies.

4. Property

In order to respect the immediate neighborhood and maintain the property at the highest possible values: BHNC staff will:

- a. Maintain the building and grounds in good condition at all times.
- b. Keep the building, property, landscaping and adjacent public rights-of-way neat and free from trash and debris at all times.
- c. Maintain an unobtrusive, well-lit and secure facility and grounds.

5. Code of Conduct

Conduct that is respectful of others contributes to the peaceful enjoyment of life in the community. Individuals have the freedom to act as they please, so long as those actions are lawful, and do not harm others or infringe upon their rights. The Code of Conduct ("Code"), set forth below, will be displayed and provided to the immediate neighborhood.

It is understood that enforcement of the Code will be a collaborative effort between the Community Collaboration Partnership and the BBHNC, especially when violations of the Code occur offsite, in the immediate neighborhood and/or community.

The BHNC staff are responsible for informing all of its clients of the Code. Violations of the Code will result in consequences ranging from written warnings to suspension from program services.

- a. Clients shall enter into a contract ("client contract") committing to adhere to this Code as they transition into permanent housing.

- b. Clients will adhere to program rules that encourage respect for others and prescribe lawful behavior for program clients.
- c. Clients shall not engage in illegal behaviors in the immediate neighborhood or community. Engagement in illegal behaviors in the immediate neighborhood or community will result in consequences ranging from written warnings to suspension from program services.
- d. Clients shall not engage in loitering, aggressive pan handling or camping in the immediate neighborhood or community.
- e. Clients shall not illegally park vehicles of any type, including bicycles, in the immediate neighborhood or community.
- f. Clients shall not litter in and around the BHNC. Meals provided at BHNC may not be taken off the BHNC property by clients.
- g. All clients suspended from services, dependent on the nature of their suspension, shall be referred to appropriate services (i.e. County Health and Human Services)
- h. Clients who violate the Code or client contract shall receive the appropriate consequences set forth in the client contract.

6. Communication

It is important to develop and maintain good communication and a positive relationship between BHNC and the immediate neighborhood and community. In order to promote communication between the BHNC, the immediate neighborhood and community, the BHNC staff will:

- a. Meet with neighbors quarterly, on a regularly scheduled basis to review the BHNC resolution process set forth below, programs, outcomes, policies, procedures, progress reports, and written responses regarding resolution of repeated issues, problems, or patterns of behavior that cause the immediate neighborhood or community. The regularly scheduled meeting time, day of the week and week of the month will be posted on the BHNC's website and the BHNC will provide an email list serve that will send out meeting reminders to all interested neighbors.
- b. Respond promptly to all concerns expressed by neighbors and community members in the following manner:
 - Provide neighbors with a contact person from BHNC for communication.
 - Upon notification of a concern, BHNC staff will first determine if the concern is an emergency (defined as a grave or imminent threat to the health or safety of any person), in which case, law enforcement or rescue services will be contacted as appropriate, as well as the BHNC supervisor on call;
 - Staff will then notify the concerned community member of the initial plan for response and a suggested time frame for follow-up;

- If BHNC staff determines the concern is not an emergency, BHNC staff will contact an BHNC supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours to discuss the concern;
 - The BHNC supervisor will review the issue, interview all persons involved, and gather additional information as needed to develop a plan to resolve the concern within five business days; and,
 - The BHNC supervisor will then follow-up with the concerned community member and involved parties as necessary within five business days (sooner if possible), and advise all parties of the resolution plan and/or status of the investigation to resolve the issue, within the boundaries of confidentiality.
- c. Meet regularly with Community Collaboration Partners to review reports, issues and policies.
- d. Document all complaints and concerns, including responses to problems and outcomes to responses, and provide a summary report to the neighbors, in aggregate data; and
- e. Notify the neighbors of major changes proposed to the program or facility, and seek advice with regard to implementation.