



CONNECTICUT
HOUSING FINANCE
AUTHORITY



CONNECTICUT

RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATOR RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK

2019

Presented by
State of Connecticut
Interagency Council on Supportive Housing and Homelessness

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. **INTRODUCTION**.....5
 - History of Resident Service Coordination.....5

- II. **RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATOR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**.....7
 - A. GOALS OF RESIDENT SERVICES.....7
 - B. ELEMENTS OF THE JOB.....8
 - Sample Job Duties.....8
 - CARSCH.....9
 - NERSC, Inc......9
 - AASC.....9
 - NEAHMA.....10
 - CONN-NAHRO.....10
 - Suggested Requirements.....10
 - Keys to Being a Successful Resident Service Coordinator.....10
 - Office Space.....11
 - C. CLARIFYING ROLES – TEAMWORK.....11
 - D. ETHICAL STANDARDS.....13
 - E. TRAINING.....14
 - F. FAIR HOUSING AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.....15
 - G. SAFETY AND SECURITY.....16
 - Personal Safety for RSCs.....17
 - Emergency Preparedness for Properties.....17
 - Resident Emergency Situations.....18
 - Security Incidents.....18
 - Safety and Security Hazards.....18
 - Unsafe Driver.....19
 - H. FOSTERING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.....19
 - Conflict of Interest.....19
 - Acceptance of Gifts.....19
 - Handling Residents’ Money.....20
 - Legal Matters.....20
 - Rumors and Gossip.....20
 - Tolerance and Discrimination.....21
 - Bullying.....21
 - I. HOW TO GET STARTED.....22
 - J. PLANNING AND ASSESSING RESIDENT SERVICES PROGRAM.....22
 - Surveys & Evaluations.....23

III. <u>COMPONENTS OF THE JOB</u>	23
A. <u>CONFIDENTIALITY</u>	23
<u>HIPAA</u>	25
B. <u>DOCUMENTATION</u>	25
<u>What should be documented?</u>	25
<u>How should documentation be done?</u>	26
<u>How should files be kept and organized?</u>	26
C. <u>COMMUNICATION</u>	27
D. <u>CREATING A NEWSLETTER</u>	28
E. <u>DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY</u>	29
<u>Components</u>	29
<u>Civic and Religious organizations</u>	30
<u>Merchants and Vendors</u>	30
<u>Health Care</u>	30
<u>Recreation and Leisure</u>	30
<u>Safety and Security</u>	31
<u>Transportation</u>	31
<u>Government</u>	31
<u>Advocacy</u>	31
F. <u>WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS</u>	32
<u>Volunteer opportunities</u>	32
<u>How to find volunteers</u>	32
<u>Interns</u>	33
G. <u>FUNDING RESIDENT SERVICES</u>	33
H. <u>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</u>	34
<u>Activities</u>	34
<u>Transportation</u>	35
IV. <u>RESIDENT ISSUES</u>	36
A. <u>DE-ESCALATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION</u>	36
<u>De-escalation</u>	36
<u>Conflict Resolution</u>	37
<u>Mediation</u>	38
B. <u>EXCESS CLUTTER AND HOARDING</u>	38
<u>Definition</u>	38
<u>Resources</u>	38
<u>Intervention</u>	39
<u>How the setting affects services</u>	40
V. <u>APPENDICES</u>	41
A. <u>RESOURCES</u>	41
B. <u>REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS</u>	42
<u>Sample form</u>	42
C. <u>LEGAL DEFINITIONS</u>	43

D. DESIGNING A RESIDENT SURVEY	43
Key Questions	43
Suggestions	44
Sample Cover Letter	45
Sample Satisfaction Survey	46
E. SAMPLE INCIDENT REPORT	47
F. SAMPLE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION	48
G. SAMPLE RELEASE OF INFORMATION	49
H. SAMPLE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT	50
I. SAMPLE OWNER/AGENT RSC CHECKLIST	51
Exhibit 13.1.1g Acknowledgement of Guidelines for Resident Service Coordinators	52

CREDITS

Thank you to the following organizations that published handbooks and training manuals for Resident Service Coordinators, from which material was used in creating this Guidebook.

Massachusetts Housing Finance Authority (MassHousing)
New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (New Hampshire Housing)
New England Resident Service Coordinators
Maine State Housing Finance Authority (Maine Housing)
Vermont Housing Finance Authority

This Guidebook, created from versions in existence by other Housing Finance Authorities and Resident Service Coordinator (RSC) training manuals, is intended for RSCs working in elderly and family housing, which also includes persons living with disabilities. Although the principles are universal, the resources include those particular to Connecticut. We hope that owners/agents will also find this handbook useful in better understanding the role of the RSC, especially if they find themselves in that role.

Thank you to the following individuals and agencies for their reviews and contributions to this Guidebook:

Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA)

Christina Keune - Connecticut Department of Housing, Office of Policy, Research and Housing Support

Ploynapas Thantaha - Connecticut Department of Housing, Office of Policy, Research and Housing Support

Andrea Dobras - New England Resident Service Coordinators, Inc.

Kathi Liberman - Connecticut Association of Resident Service Coordinators in Housing

Ellen Cyr - Connecticut Association of Resident Service Coordinators in Housing

I. INTRODUCTION

Resident Service Coordinators (RSCs) come across a myriad of social, legal, and ethical challenges as they perform their jobs.

This Guidebook is intended to provide information and a brief overview of Resident Services and the role of the RSC to emphasize the importance of training and to help RSCs find community and online resources. Although the principles are universal, the resources include those particular to Connecticut.

Examples of policies, procedures and good practices and forms are provided with the knowledge that different companies have different approaches and management styles.

It is important for RSCs to know what the policies and procedures are at their companies, and to notify management of situations and make recommendations in areas that affect their jobs but may not be adequately covered by company policy.

Throughout this Guidebook, RSCs are reminded of five key components in doing their job:

1. Helping connect residents to resources
2. Intervening
3. Documenting
4. Ensuring inclusion and non-discrimination
5. Referring potential/ lease violations to the owner/agent

These reminders are presented to help maintain perspective on the role of the RSC and to define the unique position that the RSC occupies – as both a member of the management team and an advocate for an individual’s self-determination. In addition to serving individual residents, they must also consider the needs and best interest of the community of residents they serve.

This Guidebook, with direct links to resources, is most useful in its web version at CT Department of Housing (DOH) or through a link on CHFA’s website where the up-to-date referenced resources can be immediately and directly accessed on the Internet. RSCs and other handbook users are free to use all of its recommended tools and forms. *DOH assumes no liability or responsibility for any use of this document beyond its intended purpose as a general reference tool only.* Management should consult with the company’s attorney regarding any legal questions and forms.

History of Resident Service Coordination

Service coordination is a growing profession that has expanded from an initial beginning when Congress created HUD’s Service Coordinator program through Section 808 of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 (also known as the Cranston-Gonzalez Affordable Housing Act, Public Law 101-625). This law gave HUD the authority to use Section 8 funds to employ service coordinators in Section 202 Multifamily Housing for the Elderly/Disabled. The Act also enacted the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.

Service coordination programs received additional authority through the 1992 Housing and Community Development Act (HCDA; Public Law 102-550). The HCDA Amendments of 1992 amended Section 808 through Sections 674 and 677 and added Sections 675 and 676. Section 851 of the American Homeownership and Economic Opportunity Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-569) further amended these Acts, allowing Service Coordinators to serve low-income elderly and persons living with disabilities in the vicinity of the development, and expanded the program by broadening authority for funding of service coordinators in most HUD-assisted and conventional public housing developments designated for the elderly and persons living with disabilities.

As a response to the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (the Public Housing Reform Act), Resident Opportunity for Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) became a redefined and restructured combination of programs funded previously: The Tenant Opportunities Program (TOP); Economic Development and Supportive Services Program (EDSS); and Public Housing Service Coordinators.

A CT state RSC program was first established in 1998 (PA 98-263) when the legislature required the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) now Department of Housing (DOH) to fund them by providing grants to state elderly housing project operators. RSCs were required to assist residents in state-assisted elderly housing projects to live independently. In 2005, their roles expanded to include facilitating conflict resolution between residents, including between elderly and younger residents, among other things. A summary below of PA 05-206, which redefined state funded RSCs jobs, describes the law, including RSCs duties, responsibilities, and authority to address problems (e.g., they must establish and maintain relationships with community service providers, including linking residents to appropriate services). More information regarding the program can be found here: [DOH RSC Program](#)

By law, RSCs assist residents in state-assisted elderly housing projects to live independently. The act broadened RSCs' responsibilities by requiring them to (1) organize meetings and plan activities to promote socialization among residents; (2) provide orientation services to new residents; and (3) establish and maintain relationships with community service providers, including linking residents to appropriate services. The act redefines RSCs' responsibilities for conflict mediation and resolution by specifying that they must (1) facilitate conflict resolution between residents, including between elderly and younger residents, and (2) act as liaisons to assist in problem solving. Under existing law and unchanged by the act, they also assess tenants' needs in order to establish and maintain support services, monitor the delivery of services, and advocate for service changes sought or required by the residents (CGS § 8-114d).

By law, those who qualify to live in state-assisted elderly housing are low-income people (1) age 62 and older and (2) age 61 or younger and certified by the Social Security Board or any other federal board or agency as totally disabled (CGS § 8-113a).

In addition to the DOH grants, there are other ways that local housing authorities can fund RSCs. These include (1) a budgeted line item in their operating budgets (e.g., from rental revenues), (2) local municipal social services, and (3) federal grants provided by HUD (if the authority owns or operates federally funded housing).

II. RSC ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. GOALS OF RESIDENT SERVICES

RSCs play an integral role on the property management team. RSCs:

- Enhance the ability of residents to uphold their lease obligations, such as paying rent on time, taking proper care of the unit, and ensuring quiet enjoyment of the property for all residents and surrounding neighbors
- Promote self-sufficiency
- Enhance the quality of the community
- Promote programs and efforts that enhance a resident's quality of life, help build healthy communities and encourage residents to build on their strengths
- Identify and coordinate community resources that benefit individuals and families
- Promote inclusion and tolerance by and for all residents and staff

To achieve these goals, RSCs focus on key areas of service coordination and support, according to the populations with whom they work. RSCs provide assistance in obtaining benefits and entitlements, as well as making referrals for services for such things as:

- Homemaking
- Home delivered meals
- Health care
- Transportation
- Financial planning and management
- Mental health and substance use counseling
- Employment and education strategies, such as job counseling, training, and placement, child care, family management, GED, and English as a second language
- Food and nutrition
- After school and summer camp programs
- Safety and security, including personal safety
- Programs and activities to encourage engagement and socialization, as well as prevention

B. ELEMENTS OF THE JOB

SAMPLE JOB DUTIES

Sample duties vary from property to property and funding source.

- Establish and build positive, collaborative relationships with agencies and service providers in the community who will provide direct services to residents
- Work and consult with residents, owners/agents and other applicable staff to ensure understanding of the needs of and appropriate service delivery to residents
- Provide general case management which includes intake, resource education (services available and application procedures) and referrals of residents to program and service providers in the general community. These social services may include referrals to home health aides/homemakers, financial assistance, counseling (mental health and substance use), job search/training, home ownership education, general education, food assistance and other needed services.
- Develop and maintain a Resource Directory for Residents
- [United Way 211](#) is a valuable statewide human services programs and services resource. This directory may include a listing of state and/or local service providers that residents can contact for assistance (e.g. services to families, children, individuals who are elderly, persons with disabilities, emergency assistance).
- Offer educational sessions for residents which may include subjects relating to available services and resources, health care, agency support, life skills, and referral sources, etc.
- Monitor the ongoing provision of services from community agencies to make sure that they are appropriate for the needs of the residents; and keep the case management and provider agency current with the progress of the individual. Be sure to obtain necessary releases from residents/providers. It is recommended that you consider legal guidance.
- Educate staff and property management team about the needs of and services available for residents
- Coordinate program services, use of site facilities and equipment with the other site management team members and supervisors
- Maintain up-to-date case management records; keep provider agencies current with the progress of clients as authorized by client releases of information. Ensure locked appropriate storage of resident files.
- Work collaboratively with the resident council if one exists
- Work collaboratively with service providers to ensure that program outcome measures are met
- Maintain accurate, timely and detailed documentation on all services provided
- Prepare monthly reports, e.g., statistics, number of clients served, activities/classes provided, etc.
- Submit required reports in designated formats
- Attend and participate in required/enhanced training, staff development programs, site staff meetings and other meetings. Encourage regular inclusion of maintenance staff in meetings and trainings as they observe, hear resident concerns/issues and do work in apartments. They may be privy to at-risk or developing situations that could escalate before management is aware.

- Demonstrate clarity and neatness in all forms of reporting and communication
- Maintain resident confidentiality and employ ethical practices. Maintain and promote mutually respectful, collaborative relationships with staff, residents and community partners.
- Explore opportunities for Resident Services program funding/donations from Federal, State and local agencies including non-profits. May assist with research, compiling data for, and preparing applications for funding related to grant applications.
- Attend and participate in professional group meetings; stay abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of resident supportive services and HUD/DOH program requirements and regulations as applicable. Available training/information can be accessed from the following groups:

1) CARSCH (Connecticut Association of Resident Service Coordinators in Housing)

CARSCH is a professional association committed to the development and promotion of service coordination within the housing community.

The mission of CARSCH is to provide opportunities for networking, continuing education and resource development and, at the same time, promote and professionalize the position of Resident Service Coordinator in housing for the elderly, persons with disabilities and families respectively. General membership meetings are held monthly.

Ellen Cyr, Co-Chair

Phone: 860-243-2535

Email: ellen@federationhomes.org

Maria Paredes, Co-Chair

Phone number – Work: 860-829-9133, Cell: 860-502-5699

Email: mparedes@nbhact.org

2) NERSC, INC (New England Resident Service Coordinators, Inc.)

[NERSC Inc.](#) is an organization that provides training and professional development for Resident Service Coordinators in New England and beyond. Their primary function is to expand and enhance the profession of Service Coordination by convening for a 2.5 day professional conference every May. NERSC is not a membership organization. There are no dues or fees associated with participation other than the registration fee to attend the annual conference.

3) AASC (American Association of Service Coordinators)

[AASC](#) is a national professional membership organization that provides education, support and advocacy to service coordinators and other professionals in affordable housing.

4) NEAHMA (New England Affordable Housing Management Association)

[NEAHMA](#) facilitates communication between management agents and local HUD and state housing finance agencies, to provide quality training and education on regulatory, legal, legislative and management related topics and to promote quality affordable housing.

5) CONN-NAHRO (CT National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials)

[CONN-NAHRO](#) offers a forum for public housing professionals who are dedicated to providing safe, decent and affordable housing for all Connecticut citizens, particularly those with very low, low and moderate incomes. They provide relevant training opportunities, timely housing information, and a strong professional network of resources.

Suggested Requirements for RSCs

- HUD requirements state that RSCs will have a bachelor's or an advanced degree in social work, psychology, gerontology, counseling, or related specialty.

OR in absence of a degree, significant work experience relevant to the position

- Master of Social Work (MSW) may be required in situations in which the RSC supervises social work students, interns, non-professionals, or para-professionals. There are internship opportunities that don't require a MSW for student supervision. Contact individual programs to learn more.
- Knowledge of relevant state, federal, and local resources and agencies

Keys to Being a Successful Resident Service Coordinator

- Flexibility – expecting the unexpected
- Consistency – being reliable
- Creativity – thinking outside the box; trying new solutions; coming up with new programs
- Organization – developing systems, procedures, calendars, files, etc.
- Recognizing the strengths of each resident, not just the needs
- Respecting people – across cultures, races, and personalities
- Understanding boundaries – in order to avoid co-dependency, unreasonable expectations, liability, ethical conflicts, burnout, favoritism or inappropriate relationships, responsibilities
- Being a good mediator and problem solver
- Communicating effectively
- Being a skilled and active listener
- Being a team player and collaborator
- Patience
- Empathy

Office Space

Ideally, to be effective, RSCs must be able to talk confidentially – in person or by phone – with residents, families, providers, and staff. It is suggested that RSCs have an office space. RSCs need to maintain organized and confidential records and have the quiet space to sort out complicated issues. The office needs to be accessible for persons living with disabilities. It needs to be private as well, so that conversations can be held out of the hearing and sight of others. If possible, the office should be near a place where residents congregate naturally (e.g., off the community room, near the mailboxes, or near the laundry room), and separate from the management office – but not isolated.

RSCs should have access to a dedicated computer with online access.

If no confidential space in an office is available, RSCs may need to conduct conversations in the resident's unit, only if safe to do so. If the discussion may involve a conflict, follow safety protocol put in place by management. Some situations may call for the presence of another staff person/witness, whether it is in the office or a resident's unit and notifying management of your whereabouts.

C. CLARIFYING ROLES – TEAMWORK

The owner/agent and RSC are a team – and good teamwork is essential to the success of the RSC program. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly delineated, as should lines of communication, reporting, and supervision. The owner/agent and RSC should meet on a regular basis to update one another and keep each other well informed. The owner/agent should help plan the service program for the property, in line with the mission, goals of the owner, and should participate in hiring the RSC. How residents view management and resident services is greatly impacted by how well the owner/agent and RSC work together.

The owner/agent and RSC can complement each other's roles when handling difficult resident issues, especially those involving lease violations that could lead to eviction. Potential eviction may motivate a resident to seek services that he or she previously resisted. Similarly, the RSC can point out to the resident that the resident's behaviors are a lease violation that could lead to eviction if nothing is done to change the situation. Since the RSC will be working with residents and the owner/agent to resolve violations, it is essential that the RSC is provided with a copy of the lease or occupancy agreement and understands its provisions. Additionally, RSCs should understand the rent structure of the property, including subsidies, if applicable, so that the RSC can be informed when assisting with non-payment issues and can help the resident understand options.

	Resident Services Coordinator Staff (RSC)	Property Management (PM)
Tenant Selection/Interviewing	Usually no active role, must be aware of fair housing policies	Usually conducts the tenant selection and maintains the waitlist. Gathers all information during tenant selection
Orientation of Incoming Tenants	Best practice: RSC staff is part of orientation, explaining to new residents what services are available, local resources, etc. Might also review house rules, see if any questions/concerns	Orient tenants about building maintenance, fire drills, policies/procedures, goes over the lease and house rules
Rent Payments	Offer assistance and referrals when residents are having trouble paying rent. Set up budget classes, help residents set up online rent payment, etc., if applicable	Responsible for collecting rent and addressing issues of payment plans if possible (also responsible for eviction notices, even if due to non-payment of rent)
Dealing with Nuisance & Disruptive Behaviors	Conflict resolution, helping residents understand what the disruptive behavior is, re-iterating house rules, policies/procedures. If the disruptive behavior is something that can be alleviated by outside supports, connecting resident with those supports. Still responsible for ensuring policies/regulations are followed	Make resident aware of behaviors, possible referral to RSC, reiterating policies/procedures, handing out lease violations, eviction notices if warranted
Procedures During Crises	<p>Policies and procedures should dictate what to do in an emergency. Each role should be clearly defined. Chain of command should clearly be spelled out.</p> <p>Ensure Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has list of all mobility impaired individuals.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures should dictate what to do in an emergency. Each role should be clearly defined. Chain of command should clearly be spelled out</p> <p>Ensure EMS has list of all mobility impaired individuals.</p>
Tenant Grievance Process	<p>A system should be in place in which every resident concern/grievance is handled in the same manner.</p> <p>Best Practice: written grievance procedure which will allow for follow up from RSC/PM or both.</p>	<p>A system should be in place in which every resident concern/grievance is handled in the same manner</p> <p>Best Practice: written grievance procedure which will allow for follow up from RSC/PM or both</p>
Tenant Councils	Facilitate initial meetings. Help create by-laws, be Attend meeting when presence is requested. an arm of assistance (printing flyers, adding content to newsletter, etc.)	Attend meeting when presence is requested
Community Rooms	Be aware of trends in the community and plan strategies for positively influencing the culture. Ensure all residents feel safe to use room. Ensure all policies/procedures are followed	Be aware of trends in the community and plan strategies for positively influencing the culture. Ensure all residents feel safe to use room. Enforce policies/procedures. Handle room reservations (if applicable)
Safety/Security	Responsible for notifying PM regarding safety breeches and security concerns	Responsible for ensuring building safety and security, addressing issues brought to light

D. ETHICAL STANDARDS

According to HUD, as referenced in the July, 2018 [HUD's Service Coordinators in Multifamily Housing Program Resource Guide](#), **HUD requires service coordinators to report issues of abuse or neglect.** "If the service coordinator finds that the resident is being neglected or abused, the service coordinator must report the issue regardless of whether the resident gives consent. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, economic or financial exploitation, emotional abuse, abandonment, or self-neglect. If the service coordinator suspects abuse, he or she should report the issue to the appropriate authorities (e.g. Adult Protective Services or the local police) in extreme or urgent situations. The service coordinator should inform his or her supervisor of situations when referrals to Adult Protective Services have been made. Certain situations may also require advice and/or consultation from legal counsel. It is highly recommended that management consult with the property's legal counsel and establish a protocol for addressing these matters."

RSCs who are social workers are "mandated reporters". [CT Mandated Reporters of Abuse and Neglect](#) lists those required by law to disclose child abuse, elder abuse, or abuse of a person with disabilities, to the appropriate authorities. [Disability Rights Connecticut](#) is another resource for concerns regarding persons with disabilities. Even though non-HUD RSCs and other staff may or may not be mandated to report such abuse, it is good ethical practice for management companies to make such reporting a part of their practice. It is recommended that policies and procedures be established to address and include RSCs and others to make referrals to protective service agencies. It is recommended that the owner/agent seek legal counsel regarding the interpretation of the State of Connecticut Statutes regarding mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect, along with associated policies, procedures and potential liabilities.

Ethical standards would promote the following:

1. RSCs will work with all residents.
2. RSCs will work in the best interests of the resident community, preserving residents' rights, working for the safety of the resident and the well-being of the community.
3. RSCs will involve residents in all phases of individual service coordination. The RSC will respect and promote the right of self-determination for each resident.
4. RSCs will help residents make informed decisions, providing information on options, without imposing their own opinions.
5. RSCs will acknowledge a resident's freedom of choice over personal safety and the residents' choice to live at risk or with unmet needs – provided the resident is competent to make such choices and is not violating the law or the lease agreement.
6. RSCs must take action, which may conflict with the residents' choices, if in the professional judgment of the RSC, the resident poses a serious, foreseeable risk to self or to others, or poses a danger to property.
7. RSCs will give each resident a Confidentiality Agreement and will obtain a written Release of Confidential Information before disclosing information to a third party, including family members.

8. RSCs will meet with residents in a location that insures the resident's privacy. RSCs will not discuss confidential matters in public places, such as hallways, community rooms, and elevators. Caution will be taken not to transmit confidential information when using fax machines, email, and voice mail.
9. RSCs will keep resident files in a secured, locked location. RSCs should notify residents in writing that management has access to and owns the resident files.
10. RSCs may disclose confidential information when necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable harm to the resident or someone else or in situations where there is a lease violation.

E. TRAINING

Initial and ongoing training are important components of the RSC's job. Training helps connect RSCs with resources, mentors, and peers, as well as keeping RSCs abreast of current ideas and relevant/updated information in the field of resident services. Training can also help RSCs attain and enhance competency in areas outside their previous training or experience.

For RSCs who are funded through HUD grants or subsidies, there are specific requirements for training that need to be met. HUD's Management Agent Handbook [here](#), stipulates that all service coordinators serving the elderly and people with disabilities must have met a minimum of 36 training hours of classroom/seminar time before hiring, OR will complete these minimum training requirements within 12 months of initial hiring. The 36 hours must cover all nine of the following subject areas, four hours each. The first seven of these are statutory:

- The Aging Process
- Elder Services
- Disability Services
- Federal and State Entitlements
- Legal Liability Issues Relating to Providing Service Coordination
- Medication/Substance Abuse
- Mental Health Issues
- Strategies for Communicating Effectively in Difficult Situations
- Strategies for Dealing with Cognitive Impairments

Continuing Education: After completion of statutory training requirements, all service coordinators serving the elderly or people with disabilities should attend at least 12 hours of training annually. Continuing education is necessary in order to be an effective professional. At a minimum, service coordinators must remain current on changing statutes at all levels and current practices in aging and/or disability issues.

The Office of Housing encourages the involvement of other members of the property management team in service coordinator training as appropriate and necessary to that specific property. The more service coordinators and other members of the property management teams understand each other's roles, functions and responsibilities, the smoother the operation of the project. Training may be approved as an eligible project expense.

It is suggested that RSCs have the opportunity to attend training annually in order to remain current on changing topics at all levels and current practices in aging and/or disability issues.

These areas may include:

- Identifying Service Needs and Availability
- Monitoring and Evaluating Services, Effectiveness, Adequacy, and Need for Changes
- Networking - The process of establishing linkages with service providers and tapping resources to enhance service provision
- Creative Strategies in Service Provision
- Ethics/Confidentiality
- Recordkeeping and Reporting
- Working with Resident Organizations
- Support Networks for Residents
- Peer Networks
- Working with owner/agents - understanding the role and priorities; techniques on how to work in concert with owners/agents
- Communications
- Negotiation/Brokering
- Counseling
- Advocacy
- Teamwork/Consensus-Building
- Motivation
- Outreach Strategies
- Crime and Safety
- Death and Loss
- Living Wills/Trusts
- Guardianship/Power of Attorney/Conservatorship
- Cultural Competency
- Excessive clutter/hoarding intervention

F. FAIR HOUSING AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

As a part of the property management team, it is important for RSCs to know the rights and obligations residents and housing providers have under federal and state laws regarding discrimination. Under fair-housing laws, people in protected classes cannot be denied housing or services - or be treated differently or separately - on the basis of: race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, religion, disability, familial status, marital status, age, veteran status, lawful source of income and gender identity or expression or sexual orientation. Refer to [Reasonable Accommodations](#) for further information.

RSCs need to know who is protected under fair-housing laws because these laws cover the kinds of questions applicants and residents can and cannot be asked, and how information received from applicants and residents must be treated. For example, an RSC cannot complete an intake (resident information questionnaire) or needs assessment of residents that requests information on such things as the existence, nature, or severity of medical conditions or disabilities - unless this information is necessary and the resident is informed that answering

the question is voluntary and that the information will only be used for the purposes stated. Residents may ask the RSC for help filling out applications that request such information. ADA Paratransit <https://www.ctada.com> , for example, requests: “Please list by name what disabilities or health related conditions prevent you from using the public bus service”: In these situations, it is appropriate for RSCs to ask residents relevant questions in order to assist them. When residents share personal information with the RSC about the nature or severity of a medical condition or disability, the RSC must keep this information confidential and may not share it with anyone without the resident’s written release. See Section V. APPENDIX F. SAMPLE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. RSCs may also be called upon to advocate for a resident who is being discriminated against in the receipt of entitlements, benefits, or services, so it is important for RSCs to know about fair-housing laws and residents’ rights.

In addition, both Connecticut and the federal fair housing laws require that housing providers make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, and services – as well as physical modifications – for people with physical and mental disabilities.

RSCs need to know about reasonable accommodations because often it is the RSC who learns first of the resident’s need for an accommodation. For example, Tenant X meets with the RSC about personal hygiene issues. She reveals that she is not bathing because she can no longer step over the side of the bathtub unaided due to arthritis. The RSC helps Tenant X fill out a request for a reasonable accommodation to have grab bars put in her bathroom that will help her be able to use her tub and shower again.

The owner/agent of any affordable housing property must have a written reasonable accommodation policy. The owner/agent should be able to provide a copy of the company policy (a sample form for residents to request an accommodation is provided in Section V. Appendix B. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS).

RSCs should be sure that written material (e.g., the newsletter, important announcements, policies and procedures, etc.), meetings, programs, activities, and trips are accessible to persons with disabilities, including, but not limited to those with visual, hearing, and mobility challenges.

RSCs should receive training in fair housing and reasonable accommodations.

G. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Maintaining a safe and secure environment is a team effort involving management, maintenance, security, local police/state troopers, residents, resident services, and the larger community.

It is suggested there be a sign-in/sign-out process for all visitors and volunteers. Utilization of ID badges also adds to safety and security. Residents should be notified of persons authorized to conduct business on the premises, such as contractors who may be on the property/need to enter individual units or program instructors who may use the facilities.

Many local police/state troopers, fire and health departments provide prevention programs.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design is another way to enhance safety and security. Please reference CHFA's [CPTED Maintenance Manual](#).

Personal Safety for RSCs

In order to insure personal safety, RSCs should take the following steps:

1. Report any verbally abusive or threatening behavior – by resident, guest, vendor, contractor, or other – immediately to management. Document it in writing.
2. When going to a resident's apartment take a phone or a two-way radio. Let someone in the office/management know where you are going and when you expect to be back. If an at-risk situation, it is recommended that you not go alone, for safety reasons and to have a witness.
3. Arrange your office so that you can leave if someone's behavior becomes threatening. For example, avoid positioning yourself behind a desk, where the desk and the individual are between you and the only door out of the office.
4. If your office is isolated from other employees or other activity, ask to have a "panic button" installed or to be equipped with a portable one. Make sure there is a way to summon help in an emergency.
5. Do not hesitate to call 911 if you feel physically threatened. Take threats seriously.
6. Take safety training through your local police department.
7. Find out if your local police department/state trooper has Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) certified officers. They are specifically trained in de-escalation of mental health crises.

Emergency Preparedness for Properties

All sites should have an emergency/evacuation plan in collaboration and coordination with the local city/town emergency/evacuation plan. Preparation of the plan is usually the responsibility of the owner/agent. The owner/agent is also responsible for carrying out the plan, including fire/evacuation drills. However, all staff, including RSCs, should know what the plan is and what their role is in the plan should their property need to be evacuated. RSCs have an important role in making sure emergency plans incorporate the special needs of residents with disabilities or residents who are frail and may not be able to evacuate on their own.

October is Fire Prevention month and is a good time for RSCs to hold events that help make residents aware of fire safety in their homes, check smoke/carbon monoxide detectors and identify any other safety/health concerns. It is also a good time for management to plan a fire/evacuation drill. Enlist the assistance of your local fire department for training, drills and to check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Entering units to check detectors also affords an opportunity for the fire department to identify and address any other potential fire code violations, such as extension cords, excessive clutter or hoarding, etc. They may also identify other health and safety concerns that may warrant further referrals/interventions.

For more information, please reference the CHFA website section "Property Management Resources" [here](#) which includes CHFA's SSHP Emergency Operations Plan Template.

Resident Emergency Situations

RSCs should keep in mind the following when an emergency arises:

- Don't go alone to an apartment to check on the welfare of a resident (e.g., when you are concerned that you haven't seen someone for a number of days).
- Always practice universal precautions. It is recommended that you keep latex or rubber gloves and safety boot and shoe covers in your office and always take them when responding to an emergency.
- If a resident has fallen, do not try to lift the resident, even when the resident urges you to help. This is in order to avoid injury to you or to the resident. Call for trained help from an emergency responder. Stay with the resident until the emergency responder arrives. Reassure the resident and try to make him or her as comfortable as possible without moving them.
- All threats need to be taken seriously, whether the individual is threatening to harm him or herself or others. You should report any threat of violence to the authorities and to management.
- Report all emergency situations to the owner/agent and complete any required incident forms.

Security Incidents

All security incidents that pose a threat to safety and security of residents or staff need to be reported to management. In order to improve resident security and to reduce rumor and gossip, these security incidents should be treated openly whenever possible, respecting rights of confidentiality (i.e., not disclosing the identity of a sexual assault victim). A resident meeting should be held, with critical staff including management, community police and security officers, in attendance. Descriptions of perpetrators should be posted/distributed. Information should be disseminated as quickly as possible in order to reinforce/restore security and to head off misinformation, and unnecessary elevated fear and anxiety.

RSCs should be aware of the Domestic Violence Against Women Act and its requirements for housing providers - [CHFA VAWA Guide](#).

Safety and Security Hazards

Be another set of eyes and ears on the property. If you see or hear anything that could be a safety or security issue, report it to management. This could be a trip and fall hazard, a door that isn't locked, lights that are not working or an elevator that isn't working properly, a loitering stranger, verbal threat, for example. Make sure that the problem is reported/resolved.

CHFA published a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) brochure which can be found [here](#).

Unsafe Driver

If you or others have concerns about an unsafe driver on your site, discuss how to address the situation with management.

If you SEE a resident (or any person) driving unsafely, report it immediately via 911. They are putting themselves, others and potentially your property at risk.

If you, management, or another concerned person decides to make a report to the Department of Motor Vehicles to review the person's continued capacity to drive, the contact information is listed below:

Non-Medical referral Form: <http://www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/p-244.pdf>

Medical provider Form: <http://www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/20/29/p-142m.pdf>

Mail this Affidavit to: Department of Motor Vehicles, Driver Services Division, 60 State Street, Wethersfield, CT 06161-2525. The Affidavit will be reviewed to determine if any further action is required.

NOTE: THIS FORM IS SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE TO THE LICENSEE

H. FOSTERING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

A primary focus for an RSC is building a sense of community at the property. This can be achieved through a variety of ways including an inviting and comprehensive welcome packet, monthly newsletter, enrichment classes, discussion groups, and other activities. It is also an integral facet of the job to establish a relationship with individual residents. This process may begin with the applicant interview and will continue upon the applicant move-in, initial interview with the new resident, completion of forms, and future meetings (e.g., case management, assistance with benefits, etc.). The relationship with individual residents will vary according to the personality and level of strengths/needs of the resident, including his/her physical and mental health and your engagement practices.

Fostering healthy relationships includes establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries. The successful RSC will support residents without getting overly involved; will treat residents fairly and equally without showing preference; and will be empathetic without losing objectivity.

Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest can be real or perceived. An example of a real conflict is promoting a vendor in which the RSC has a financial interest. Developing friendships with residents that go beyond the professional relationship harbors both real and perceived conflicts of interest. If RSCs have any questions about whether a situation is a conflict of interest, they should discuss it with a supervisor.

Acceptance of Gifts

Owners/agents usually have a policy about accepting cash or other gifts from residents. Although it is hard to decline a generous gesture, this is another form of conflict of interest.

Residents may expect to be treated more favorably as a result of their gift. Other residents may perceive the acceptance of even small gifts as favoritism toward the resident bestowing the gift. RSCs can suggest that residents and/or family members show their appreciation with a gift that benefits the resident community or a donation to the residents' fund, and that a note of thanks is always appreciated.

Handling Residents' Finances

If a resident is having difficulty with money management, RSCs should refer the resident to find a trusted family member/friend or service agency that will help the resident. RSCs should not handle residents' finances themselves. The RSC can't take a role in helping residents with their finances without risking accusations of mishandling funds or taking advantage of the RSC's position of authority and unduly influencing the resident. It should also be noted that residents in the early stages of dementia are forgetful or may have paranoid thoughts about people stealing from them. [CT Probate Courts](#) may also be a resource for applications of voluntary or involuntary Conservators of the Estate and/or Person. A conservator may be appointed to manage a person's finances (conservator of the estate) and/or personal affairs (conservator of the person) if determined incompetent.

The RSC can help enforce good management company practice, which should stipulate that staff are never to be paid by residents for their services, nor are staff to perform services for residents off-site or outside of working hours. RSCs are often in the position of handling money for trips, holiday dinners, etc. In these situations, the money is in exchange for a ticket, an event or a specific program. RSCs need to use good accounting practices when they are in this position – maintaining records and keeping the money in a safe location.

Legal Matters

It is not uncommon for a resident to seek legal assistance for a variety of reasons, and the RSC can be helpful by referring the resident to seek the services of an attorney or to Legal Services. The following websites provide links to legal services offices in Connecticut:

[CT Law Help](#)

[CT Legal Rights Project](#)

[CT Legal Services, Inc.](#)

RSCs can help further by holding informative workshops on topics such as child custody, no fault divorce, wills, health care proxy, power of attorney, guardianship, tenant/landlord rights, etc. It is important, however, that RSCs never be designated as the health care proxy, power of attorney, guardian or conservator for any resident. Some helpful Legal Definitions for RSCs are included in SECTION V. Appendix C. LEGAL DEFINITIONS.

Rumors and Gossip

Rumors and gossip are not uncommon occurrences in a residential community, and they can be a negative force in the community. Often it is difficult to discern the source of the rumors. However, the following are some positive suggestions for how to deal with rumors/gossip:

- Actively listen to the person or persons informing you of the gossip or the target of the rumor
- Gather as much information as possible in an attempt to glean the source
- Deal directly with the source(s) without exacerbating the situation
- Address the issue of gossip at a resident meeting and clearly state the implications of general gossip on individuals and the community
- Have an outside speaker make a presentation on the effects of gossip
- Use the newsletter as a tool to disseminate information on gossip and its negative effect
- Visibly post the rules for respect, kind behavior, tolerance, etc. to promote a positive, healthy and happy community. A large display in a common area such as a community room is beneficial.

Tolerance and Discrimination

Gossip and rumors can be a by-product of discrimination based on a myriad of factors including age, race, ethnicity, religion, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, etc. Residents need to be able to feel safe and unthreatened in their community. The Occupancy Agreement guarantees the right to peaceful enjoyment of one's home.

Discrimination may also be a civil rights violation. Therefore, the RSC should report any instance of discrimination to management. It is very important that all staff take an active role in setting an example for the community. Staff should have the opportunity to receive periodic training in cultural competence and diversity.

Bullying

You may develop an anti-bullying mission statement to express your commitment to stopping bullying. Residents read and sign the mission statement, display it at the community center as a reminder. An example:

As a community, within the scope of our Organization's mission, "property name" is a place where everyone should feel safe and accepted, promoting a sense of belonging. Bullying will not be tolerated here and the entire community will work in collaboration to prevent all forms of bullying within "property name".

<http://stopbullyingcoalition.org/resources>

<http://stopbullyingcoalition.org/signed>

RSCs can take a proactive approach to increase tolerance. Suggestions include:

- Presentations on diversity. This could include a video series, such as "Eyes on the Prize" (history of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.)
- Celebrating specific holidays such as the Chinese New Year or Black History Month, Women's History Month – including potlucks or other ways of incorporating ethnic foods
- Incorporating arts' presentations reflecting a site's resident profile, e.g., Gospel concerts and cultural dance performances

When specific issues emerge, it is beneficial to deal with them directly, addressing the concern with the person/group engaging in the discrimination. See the Section IV. A. DE-ESCALATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION for additional information.

I. HOW TO GET STARTED

If you are new to your job, the best way to start is to be visible. Develop an action plan utilizing some of the following tips. Remember to discuss your action plan with your supervisor to ensure their support.

- Plan meetings, programs, events and “coffee hours” different times and days to accommodate different schedules
- Be out of your office as much as possible when you start – in the hallways, community rooms, laundry rooms, and outdoors – wherever residents are
- Hand out your card attached to a brochure or flyer explaining what you can do and when you are available. If you have the funds, have your name and number (including your TTY or Relay number) put on a refrigerator magnet to give each resident. In addition, send out a brief introductory letter with your card to everyone so that you reach those you don’t meet by walking around.
- Use this opportunity to schedule one-on-one appointments to update resident files with emergency information. Remember that giving such information is voluntary, except for information pertaining to the care of animals or the apartment in case the resident is incapacitated.
- Ask for help from residents in planning activities and events
- Get out in the neighborhood. Make yourself and your development known in the community. Hand out flyers; give them your business card. This is a great way to develop community partners, funding, donations and other support.
- Find out who the health care, home care, and various case management providers are and introduce yourself by phone or in person. Ask about the opportunity to join interdisciplinary provider meetings or host a meeting to bring together community partners for collaboration to enhance the quality of life and engagement of the residents you serve. Tell them what services your housing provides. Ask what services they offer, and especially ones that your residents are not using.
- Find out who provides recreation, arts, education, job training, and other activities that your residents might use – and introduce yourself to those people. Again, ask what activities and services they provide that your residents are not using.
- Take a survey of residents’ interests, talents, skills, and needs. Make it clear that this information is important for your planning and for getting to know them.

J. PLANNING AND ASSESSING RESIDENT SERVICES PROGRAM

Involving residents, staff, and owners, or boards of directors, in the planning and assessment of resident services is the key to a successful program. Finding models that are strength-based and driven by what residents want for themselves and their communities will help foster a successful program.

Surveys & Evaluations

Getting feedback from residents is an important component of the RSC's job. Written surveys and small group meetings provide opportunities to evaluate the programs that you have, to gauge interest in new programs, and to generate new ideas. A survey helps identify strengths and needs of residents, and therefore is a valuable planning tool. Be sure that surveys are available in the significant languages spoken in your development, as well as alternate formats for people with visual disabilities.

Written, mailed surveys are useful because they can be anonymous and don't consume as much staff time as individual interviews do. However, the return rate for surveys that are simply mailed out is usually quite low. To increase return, you can provide an incentive, such as sending a two-part numbered ticket with the survey. When residents return the survey, they include one part of the numbered ticket. All returned tickets are put into a raffle drawing.

The best results, however, come from one-on-one interviews with residents. Residents should be assured that the information they provide the interviewer will be kept confidential; that the goal is to summarize all answers in order to evaluate current programs and plan new ones. However, residents should also be reassured that if they bring up a particular issue with which they want assistance, the RSC will follow up with them.

Remember when preparing a survey not to ask residents if they want something that you do not have the capacity or funding to deliver – unless you make it very clear that the reason for the survey is to gauge interest for the purpose of building the capacity and finding the funding. See Section V. Appendix D. DESIGNING A RESIDENT SURVEY, which contains suggestions for designing your own resident survey to meet your goals.

III. COMPONENTS OF THE JOB

A. CONFIDENTIALITY

The RSC has a legal and ethical obligation to protect the confidentiality of the residents that she or he is serving. This means that the RSC will not disclose information that the resident has shared or that the RSC has learned in some other confidential manner with anyone else, without the resident's express, written permission that specifies what information can be shared and with whom. It is important, therefore, for RSCs to disclose to residents that the RSC's files are the property of management, and that management has access to them on a need-to-know basis. Management may need to look at files in order to insure that the RSC is doing an appropriate job of documentation and follow up; or to act in an emergency; or to step in if the RSC is absent or leaves the job. Anything that the resident does not want shared should not go in the resident's file. NOTE: If the RSC's computer is the property of management, then the RSC's computer files are also the property of management and management has access to them.

A Release of Confidential Information should be used whenever such permission is needed. Federally financed properties must include specific language required by HUD. A sample Release of Confidential Information is included in Section V. Appendix F. SAMPLE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. The RSC should sign a Confidentiality Agreement with each resident upon move-in, and update the agreement annually. A sample Confidentiality Agreement is included in Section V. Appendix G. SAMPLE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT. Please note that the owner/agent is obligated to keep a resident's financial information confidential. If the RSC needs financial information to determine if a resident qualifies for benefits, for example, the RSC needs to obtain that information from the resident independently or get a signed release from the resident before accessing information from the owner's/agent's file.

If you are an RSC there are specific limitations to your obligation for confidentiality, as listed below, and as contained in the sample Confidentiality Agreement:

You may be legally and/or ethically obligated to report adults with disabilities who have been subjected to physical abuse, neglect, or exploitation or who are living in hazardous conditions. Likewise, you may be legally or ethically obligated to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect as well as elder abuse and/or neglect, including self-neglect. Again, it is recommended that policies and procedures be established to address and include RSCs and others to make referrals to protective service agencies. Again, it is recommended that the owner/agent seek legal counsel regarding the interpretation of the State of Connecticut Statutes regarding mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect, along with associated policies, procedures and potential liabilities. Remember HUD requires reports of abuse and/or neglect.

- a. If you believe anyone is in imminent danger, you should report this to the local police department, as well as the owner/agent. Police ARE mandated reporters.
- b. If an individual has revealed information that constitutes an imminent threat of harm to him or herself or others, you should report this to the appropriate authorities, such as 911, local mobile crisis team, and the person's emergency contact, if the resident has given a written release for this type of communication with the emergency contact.
- c. You may be required by law in a court action to reveal information shared with you by a resident or contained within your resident files.
- d. You have a responsibility to your employer to report lease violations that come to your attention in the course of your duties.
- e. Episodes that occur in public settings with witnesses are not confidential, nor are police reports or most court records.
- f. In an emergency, when the resident is unable to communicate coherently, staff may give relevant confidential information to emergency responders. Staff must then inform the resident they have done so as soon as the resident is able to comprehend the information.

In order to protect confidentiality, please keep the following in mind:

1. Have access to a private setting to talk with residents and to talk on the phone. If this is not possible, you may need to arrange for another space or for certain hours that you can have privacy. In some situations, you can meet with a resident in the resident's apartment, if safe to do so.
2. Refrain from carrying on conversations that may contain confidential information in the hallways, elevators, community rooms, or any common space.
3. Remember that when you fax or email information you cannot insure confidentiality.

What is HIPAA? It is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, which sets strict standards for what and how health information can be shared among providers and by providers. While RSCs are not bound by HIPAA regulations, you are certainly affected by them as it has greatly limited information that used to be shared - for example, whether a resident that you assisted in being sent by ambulance to the hospital was admitted or not.

Without a written release, the hospital will not share information about admittance or discharge planning. To find out more about HIPAA and how it affects your work, go to www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/, the U.S. Health and Human Services website.

B. DOCUMENTATION

Confidentiality and documentation go hand-in-hand.

When documenting incidents and updating notes, keep in mind that residents are entitled to reasonable access to their records. Records are the property of management as explained in the previous section. For this reason, residents should be informed that anything they choose to disclose for their files may be accessed by management. It also means that if a resident volunteers information to the RSC that the resident does not want disclosed to anyone (medical diagnosis, for example), this information should not be recorded in the resident's file. RSCs should inform residents, as part of the Section V. Appendix G. SAMPLE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT, how their information will be kept, who has access to it, and that they have an obligation to disclose certain things, such as lease violations, to management.

What should be documented?

1. Conversations, phone calls, and written correspondence with or about a resident that are specific to the resident's well-being
2. What the resident wants
3. Follow-up on all issues
4. Names of agencies and individuals, including title, referred to, important contact information
5. Services offered and resident's refusal or acceptance of services
6. Resident's understanding and/or insight of the issue
7. Any precipitating or related incidents

8. Copies of documents, applications, or other correspondence you have helped a resident prepare (with the resident’s permission)

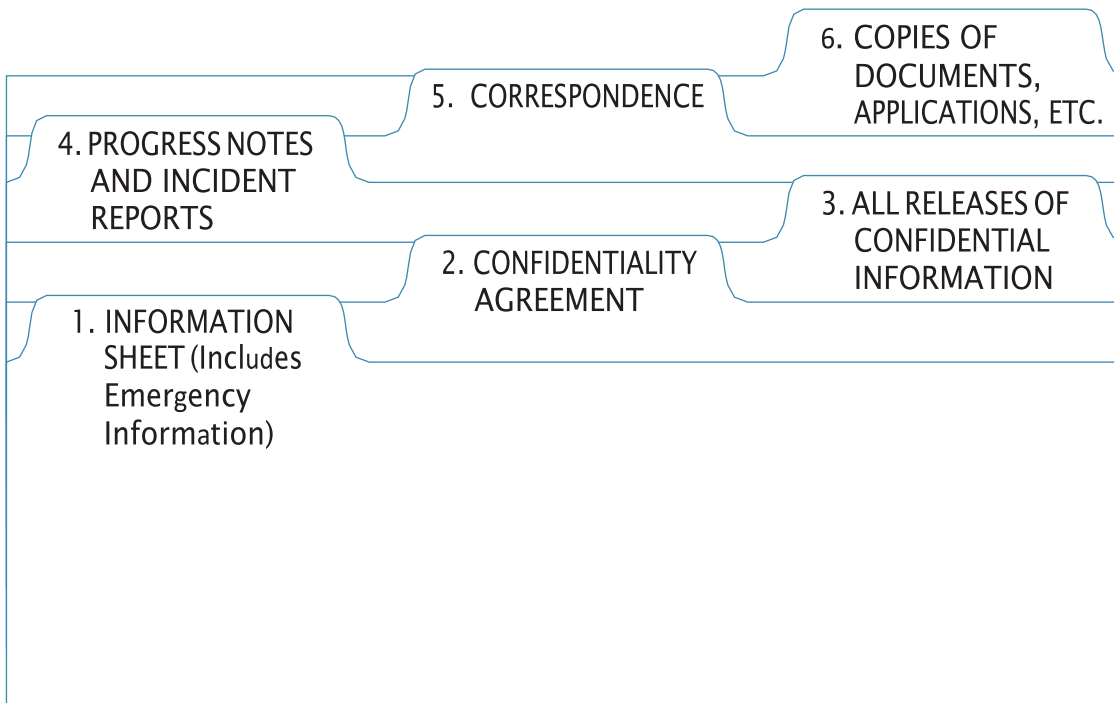
How should information be documented?

1. All documentation should be dated. Include time if it is relevant
2. Language should be specific, clear, and non-judgmental
3. Focus on what is observable, avoiding interpretation. For example, “Mr. Adams’ speech was slurred and he was unsteady on his feet,” rather than, “Mr. Adams was drunk.”
4. Document as close in time to conversation or incident as possible
5. Documentation should be legible and easy to read
6. Don’t use white out. To correct errors, cross through them and initial
7. Where possible, all files should be electronic with appropriate daily back-up

How should files be kept and organized?

Files must be kept in a secure location. Either the file cabinet needs to be locked or the office in which the files are kept must be locked when the RSC is not there. Similarly, electronic files should also be kept in a secured manner on computers.

Individual files maintained for each resident should be kept in a consistent, organized, and logical manner. Below is one suggestion for using a six-part file folder.



Management should have a policy regarding how many years information is to be kept on file and follow a proper legally required procedure for destroying records.

C. COMMUNICATION

How you communicate is important – the tone, the attention to appearance, body language and accuracy, the care you take to be inclusive. This means using microphones when addressing a group and using large print and no italics when writing messages. It means translating whenever possible for people who do not speak English as well as accommodating people with visual and hearing impairments.

An important part of the RSC's job is communication with the residents. For this reason, the RSC has to balance time spent in the office with time spent out and about; in the community room, in the hallways, on the sidewalks, wherever residents are.

As an RSC, you will also find yourself generating a lot of written communication – flyers, memos, posters, calendars, bulletin boards, and newsletters. All are important for keeping residents informed and engaged.

There are now laws [HUD LEP LAW](#) for housing that receives federal funding, requiring access for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), but regardless of the law, you want to be inclusive so that all residents have maximum opportunity to participate in the life of the community. Free websites help with simple word or phrase translation and can be found at [Top Ten Free Translation Tools](#).

It is good practice to reinforce information. In addition to putting out a monthly calendar of events, deliver flyers and post reminders on community boards and in the elevators. You must provide equally frequent notice to people with visual impairments. Reference ADA to ensure compliance. Examples may include large print materials and phone/recorded notification. Some sites have an easel or bulletin boards in common areas to reinforce what is taking place on a particular day. Reach out to key people that you want to make sure will attend. Send out emails, if that is an option. There is technology available to display information, such as a list of daily events, on a closed circuit dedicated TV channel, as hotels do. If your property has a website, see if a section can be dedicated to resident services. Check with management about opportunities to utilize social media platforms to connect with residents. Make sure you understand and abide by the property social media policies. Monitoring is important to guard against misuse and appropriateness of postings.

Your office is also an important link in communication, as it is the physical space in which much of your contact with residents will take place. It must be accessible – both physically and less tangibly so. Ideally, your office will be located in a place that will allow residents to “drop in” and will also afford privacy for your meetings. The office should be a welcoming and calming place – not chaotic or disorganized. Good communication means that when you are meeting with a resident, you silence electronic devices, put a note on your door indicating that you can't be interrupted unless it is an emergency, and give the resident your full attention.

Welcoming the New Resident/Welcome Packet

Moving into a housing development is often a difficult transition. A resident may have experienced one or more of the following: moved from a home, larger apartment, another community or state, or a shared living arrangement. The resident may have experienced loss of a significant other or spouse, experiencing a decline in health, loss of income, or no longer able to drive. The resident(s) may not be familiar with the community or know anyone. Family and friends may be limited or not close by. Providing a new resident with information about social opportunities on and off-site, how to access critical programs and services, transportation options, local retail stores, recreational opportunities, etc. will make the transition easier. See SECTION III.E. for community resource ideas to include. A person may be hesitant, afraid or not know who to ask for assistance, especially when they haven't had time to develop a trusting relationship with someone. Providing resource information provides a warm welcome and gives a resident the opportunity to independently explore what they may need or want, while maintaining their privacy and dignity.

Make every effort to greet residents as soon after they move in as possible, even if you will wait awhile before completing paperwork. Tell them who you are, what you do, and how you might be helpful to them. Make sure they know how to find their way around the property and the neighborhood. See if they have any questions about their apartment. Move-in can be a stressful and overwhelming time. It's easy to forget details, like where the trash goes and what to do if there is a maintenance problem in the apartment. You can be helpful from the beginning to forge a positive relationship.

D. CREATING A NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is an important component of resident and staff communication and community building. Customarily, it is the responsibility of the RSC to make sure periodic newsletters are published for the property. In some cases, the RSC takes full charge of the newsletter. In other cases, residents have input or greater responsibility for the newsletter. And in some cases, staff and residents each take a role in the content.

Here are some components of a successful newsletter:

- Include a calendar of events
- Celebrate accomplishments. For example, the June newsletter could congratulate new high school graduates. If the property receives an award or a high score on an inspection, that may go in the newsletter. Some properties list birthdays. However, not all residents wish to have their birthdays publicized, so if you do this, you need to have a way for residents to decline.
- Welcome new residents to the community, with their permission
- List upcoming projects or report progress on existing projects—like a capital improvement program
- Use it as a way of issuing “reminders” as long as they are phrased positively – as in, “Please remember to rinse and separate bottles and cans before putting them in the recycle containers” or “Please remember smoking is only allowed outside in designated areas”. However, residents may stop reading the newsletter if the tone sounds scolding or lecturing – as in, “If residents don't rinse and separate bottles and cans before putting them in the recycle containers, we will be forced to discontinue our recycling program”.

The newsletter should be attractive, neat, and accurate. This doesn't mean it has to be produced professionally, but carefully. It can be done in Word, Publisher, or other template form. The font size should be large and easy to read. Avoid using italics. Someone who can check spelling and grammar should proofread it.

- The newsletter needs to be accessible to residents who are not English speaking [Top Ten Free Translation Tools](#) or who are visually impaired – either through written translation or tape recording. See Section II. F. FAIR HOUSING AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION
- Newsletters can also serve as an opportunity to remind and promote being a good neighbor, posting the house rules of respect, consideration, tolerance, etc.
- Share and offer reminders about important information such as emergency preparedness, community resources and opportunities, financial assistance, health screenings, etc.

E. DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY

The Community Resource Directory is one of the most valuable tools for your work. It should contain information that you use and information that you can share with residents. It is not a stagnant document. It will need to be added to and updated; it is beneficial to provide an electronic version and a hard copy in a three-ring binder. Make sure that residents are aware of and a copy is accessible for residents' use.

[United Way 211](#) is a call center and online statewide human services resource directory which also provides the ability to customize an individual account of resources. This allows the RSC to create a list of essential resources for the community at large while providing an opportunity for residents to create a list specific to their individual needs or preferences.

In addition, online resources are invaluable and many can be found at www.nerscinc.org/rsc-resources. Ability to use the web is essential to an RSC's job – both for your own resources and to help residents find information that they need. For this reason, RSCs need to have the training necessary to use the Internet and need to have ready access to a computer. Training may be available in-house, through a local adult education center, library, trade school, or community center.

Applications such as [Google Maps](#) and [Around Me](#) can also assist in locating important resources.

What are the components of a Resource Directory?

A good resource directory includes agencies that provide programs, services or benefits for your residents – including those in your residents' languages and cultures. Here is a sample of what to include:

- Homecare services and wellness programs
- Independent Living Center
- CT Department of Social Services <http://www.portal.ct.gov/dss>
- Social Security Administration

- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), food banks, farmer's markets
- WIC Program (Women, Infants, and Children)
- Employment services – job training, job seeking, job retention
- Veteran Resources
- Gay, lesbian, and transgender, bi-sexual and questioning programs/services
- English as a Second Language
- Child care, after-school, and youth services
- Financial services – how to budget and maintain a bank account; credit services; taxes and financial planning/management, Power of Attorney (POA)/Conservatorship information
- Legal Aid
- Higher education and GED
- Dept. of Children and Family Services

Civic and religious organizations in your community

Merchants and Vendors

- Banks
- Grocery stores – do they deliver or load your car?
- Pharmacies – do they deliver, have a drive-thru?
- Area shopping, restaurants
- Repair services

Health Care

- Exploration of long term care needs: <https://www.myplacect.org/>
- Hospitals
- Veteran Resources and Services
- Community health centers, walk-in and urgent care facilities
- Mental health and counseling resources including National Alliance on Mental Illness ([NAMI](#))
- Rehabilitation programs and hospitals
- Substance use services including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)
- Specialty and health clinics
- Gay, lesbian, and transgender, bi-sexual and questioning health services

Recreation and Leisure

- Health clubs
- Recreation facilities
- Senior centers
- Teen centers
- Movie theatres
- Libraries
- Concert and stage theatres
- Walking and bike paths
- Organized teams and youth activities
- Summer camps

- Museums
- Adult Education Centers
- Sports Complexes/Arenas

Safety and Security

- Police, Fire, Ambulance
- Community Crime Watch
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design- [CHFA CPTED](#)
- Emergency shelters <https://www.211ct.org/>
- Safe Houses – shelter for domestic violence <https://www.211ct.org/> or <https://intervalhousect.org/>
- Connecticut Crisis Services; <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?q=386612>

Transportation

- Taxi, [Uber](#), [Lyft](#)
- [CT Transit](#)
- [CT Fastrak](#)
- Dial-a-Ride, ADA paratransit programs may also be available in your area
- Train [Amtrak](#), [Hartford Line](#)
- Rental cars - including Zipcars www.zipcar.com/
- Parking permits for disabled drivers <https://www.dmv.org/ct-connecticut/disabled-drivers.php>

Government and Elected Officials

- City/Town mayor, councilor, alderman, or equivalent
- City or town hall and their constituent services-links to websites are recommended
- CT State Senators and Representatives <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>
- US Senators and Representatives [US Congress Members](#)
- CT Governor’s Office [CT Office of the Governor](#)

Advocacy Organizations

- Disability Rights [Disability Rights CT](#)
- Legal Services [CT Legal Services](#)
- Housing Consumer Education Centers and other tenancy supports

F. WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an invaluable resource for RSCs and the residential community. Recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers take a good deal of time, but well worth the effort.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Organizing activities for children and adults
- Answering phones and greeting visitors
- Delivering notices, but not legal documents like KAPA (notice to quit) notices
- Friendly visiting. There should be some sort of vetting of volunteers, i.e. liability having access to residents, their medications, cash, checks, credit cards, etc. You also want to reduce risk of false accusations or actual abuse.
- Doing errands for residents who are homebound
- Setting up for events
- Serving on committees

It is important to note that any volunteer who will work with children or elders must have a Criminal Offender Record (COR) and, in some cases, Sex Offender Record (SOR) background checks reviewed and approved by the person in your company authorized to do so. The property manager should be consulted regarding any provisions to the property insurance to cover volunteers on the property.

How to find volunteers: The first place to look is among the residents. There are also resources in each community. In particular:

- Local Schools, colleges and universities
- Businesses/Corporations (Local businesses and institutions may be available for work projects or community-wide celebrations)
- Local volunteer organizations (e.g., United Way, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, boy/girl scouts, Volunteers of America, VISTA, service clubs, other civic organizations like Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)

Consider recruiting local high school students for on-site programs, recreation and entertainment. Nursing students may be able to provide screenings and wellness programs.

Students and volunteers may not be allowed and/or covered by school/company policy and/or insurance to drive or drive with residents, so they may need to utilize public transportation or meet the resident at the destination.

Volunteers need to be oriented to the residential communities in which they will work, as well as non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation policies. It is good practice to have all volunteers read and sign the property's non-discrimination policy (check with management for the policy). All volunteers need assignments that match their skills and interests and provide a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. The RSC should be prepared to offer training; to introduce outside volunteers to staff and residents; to let staff and residents know what all volunteers will be doing; to make sure volunteers have the equipment and access they need to perform their work successfully; to make sure the volunteers have a clear

description of the work they will do; to make sure they understand confidentiality and boundaries; and to meet regularly with the volunteers to check in and to provide positive feedback.

It is important to have a volunteer orientation packet which includes a confidentiality agreement, policies, protocols and a description of their assignment/duties. The packet should be reviewed with the volunteer and signed by the volunteer that they fully understand and accept the terms and expectations. For safety and security reasons, ID tags and a sign in/sign out procedure should also be in place.

It is good practice to recognize volunteers – both informally and through an annual appreciation event. RSCs may be asked to write recommendations for student volunteers or interns and should do so when it is appropriate.

College/University Interns

College students majoring in social work, human services, gerontology, youth, family, etc. often need internship placement opportunities that would be compatible with the programs and services you currently or want to offer.

MSW students are required to complete internships. Social work students can be an asset to the resident community, and the fieldwork placement in housing can be a valuable asset to the student's training. In general, colleges and universities require weekly fieldwork supervision by the agency (or housing development) where the student is placed.

Social Work interns can enhance the RSC's work by focusing on one-to-one visitation and counseling, running groups, such as parenting groups, men's groups, etc., researching and doing outreach to community resources, and anything else that will enhance the student's education and provide a valuable resource to the community.

G. FUNDING RESIDENT SERVICES

While the job of funding the resident service program is ordinarily the responsibility of the owner or management agent, it is important for RSCs to know more about the opportunities and challenges that funding presents and how they can help advocate for and support resident services at their properties.

Because owners, developers, and funders must take the cost/benefit equation into consideration, RSCs and management can support efforts for more resident service funding by supplying the data – e.g., number of people who get jobs, number of prevented evictions, number of people who are able to remain at home rather than go into assisted living or skilled nursing, increase in marketability compared to other properties.

Funding Sources

The Multifamily Division of HUD generally looks for the operating budget or residual receipts to fund resident service positions. In the 202/PRAC program, the RSC expense is included in the pre-development application. In the 202/Section 8 program, HUD must approve the position in advance. Properties are expected first to use their residual receipts and then apply for a rent increase to fund the position. All other HUD programs must go through a process available annually under the SuperNOFA competition. Those selected receive a three-year funding grant. Eligibility requirements for one category of funding include that at least 25% of the population served is frail or at-risk elders and/or non-elderly persons with disabilities.

Public Housing and Multifamily Divisions of HUD offer another category of funding under the SuperNOFA Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Grant.

- HUD Grants <https://www.grants.gov/>
- Enterprise Foundation, <https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/financing-and-development/grants>

As stated previously, A CT state RSC program was first established in 1998 (PA 98-263) when the legislature required the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) now Department of Housing (DOH) to fund RSC positions by providing grants to state elderly housing project operators. More information regarding the program can be found here: [DOH RSC Program](#).

The housing development may also be eligible for grants or charitable contributions and gifts. Some housing is formed as a tax-exempt, charitable entity, for example as a 501(c 3), In other cases the housing development may be owned by a non-profit, tax-exempt entity. Such housing is eligible to apply for private grants and to receive charitable donations.

For more information, consult the following:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/spm/gmomgmt/grantsinfo
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>

H. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Activities

An activities program is an important element of a healthy residential community. Its purpose is to strengthen the physical, emotional and social well-being of residents – from young children through senior adults. Activities also help build rapport among residents and staff; help develop trust between residents and RSC; and help market the property. RSCs can help develop these resources at their properties and in the community and be instrumental in the coordination and provision of an activities program. Activities and programs that benefit the goals of resident services play an integral role in an overall plan for the property. It is important to include onsite and offsite offerings to enhance community engagement.

Best practices involve volunteers, college student interns, community partners and residents in planning and executing activities.

A community-wide survey is a helpful planning tool. There are some models referenced in SECTION V. Appendix D. DESIGNING A RESIDENT SURVEY. It is useful to consider the following:

- What do children do when school is out – each day, during vacation weeks, over the summer?
- What tools and resources do residents need to obtain jobs/better jobs and seek higher education?
- How should holidays, milestones, anniversaries, etc. be recognized?
- What will help neighbors get to know each other better?
- What are the social interests of this community?
- What are the health concerns of this community?
- What do people like to do to relax and have fun, including recreation, the arts, and public events? How can they gain better access to these resources in the community?
- How do people continue to learn throughout their lives? Face to face, webinars, classes (in-house or off site), websites, printed material, etc.?
- What will draw out people who are lonely or who don't speak the dominant language? If there are several languages, what will bring language groups together?
- What will encourage older people and people with varying abilities to remain engaged and active?
- What skills or hobbies do they have? Would they like to lead an activity in this area?

Additional Considerations:

- Advertising activities in the newsletter, by flyer, large display in a community room and/or bulletin board and/or in a calendar helps insure that everyone has access. This should be available in alternate formats to accommodate different languages and abilities. Email, websites and social media should be utilized where available and in accordance with management policies.
- RSCs have developed excellent ideas for how properties can provide activities in communities with more than one primary language – including music, food, physical exercise, pet therapy and other non-verbal activities. Network with other RSCs for ideas and resources.
- Activities should be based on the survey results and feedback received after each activity to ensure the needs of the community are being met. Each community is different.
- Each property should have a protocol for scheduling activities and the use of community space. Whenever possible, the RSC should be the point of contact.

Transportation:

Mobility is an important aspect of a resident's ability to receive and participate in essential programs, services and activities. Residents need information on the full range of transportation options available to them including public transportation, city-provided transportation, taxi, Uber, Lyft, medical transportation such as Veyo, dial-a-ride and ADA

paratransit, etc. RSC's often help residents find transportation services to meet their essential needs, such as getting to medical appointments, jobs, school, and shopping.

RSCs should have available for residents a list of area transportation services, including bus, and commuter rail routes, schedules and fares; how and where to obtain taxi ; transport services available for elders and people with disabilities; rental cars and Zipcar Routes, schedules and fares for public transportation are available via the internet. For example, visit <https://www.cttransit.com/services/transportation-ct>.

Management should have a policy about staff transporting residents in their own vehicles. RSCs should not transport residents in their personal cars. This is problematic for several reasons: it raises liability issues; it is not a good use of time; it crosses a boundary between the role of RSC and that of friend or personal assistant; residents may see it as a “service” the site offers, and therefore the service must be offered to all. RSCs should consult with management on policies regarding accompanying residents off-site.

The internet will also provide you with information on transportation services in your area for elders and persons with disabilities. For example, visit [ADA paratransit application](#).

IV. RESIDENT ISSUES

A. DE-ESCALATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

De-Escalation

Verbal and physical altercations can erupt at any property, no matter whether it is family housing, elderly housing, or assisted living. Staff should all work from the same guidelines and principles when intervening in an argument or fight. Staff should train together on how to intervene. Partner with your local police department for staff training/safety protocols and educational presentations to residents that emphasize safety, rules and expected behavior. Find out if your local police department has CIT trained officers. They are specifically trained to de-escalate situations to have better outcomes. Ask for them when calling 911.

Here are some principles:

- Keep a cell phone or 2-way radio with you at all times.
- Assess the situation – What do you know about the individuals involved? Is there danger of imminent harm to anyone, including yourself? Has anyone been injured? If so, call 911 and call for help from other staff members.
- Do not put yourself or others in danger.

What to do:

- If safe to do so, state calmly, firmly, and assertively that the argument or fight must stop immediately.
- If there are other residents around, ask them to leave the area, if appropriate and possible.
- If safe to do so, tell the individuals they must separate and stay away from one another until they have calmed down and until the fight has been addressed.
- Do not take sides, make accusations or threats. Keep your voice level and calm.

- Don't address the issue under dispute and make it clear you will not do so until there has been a cooling off period.
- Document what happened: what you saw and what you overheard. What else did you observe? Examples: Was there alcohol involved? Were racial slurs or other kinds of name-calling used? What did other witnesses say about the event? If the police came, what did they do? Make sure you document observations without drawing conclusions. State facts not feelings, for example don't state or write "he appeared inebriated." Instead, "he was unsteady on his feet; it was difficult to understand what he was saying."

Conflict Resolution

Actively seeking conflict resolution can be very helpful after those fighting have cooled off. It can also be effective in situations where there is ongoing conflict before it escalates into a full-blown argument. Depending on the situation, RSCs can seek outside mediation or the RSC and owner/agent can attempt to intervene constructively themselves. There are principles to follow in mediation:

- Both parties must want mediation, even if the motivation is to preserve tenancy. Find the common ground. What do the parties want out of mediation?
- Assess the parties involved. Are there mental health issues that would indicate having an advocate or mental health counselor involved in the mediation? Are there other cognitive or language issues that would make "talking it out" challenging? If one person has a disability, particularly involving mental health, is there anything required to ensure equal access and a "level playing field" for mediation? Are the parties involved willing to try to work out their differences?
- Assess and understand your own biases before entering into conflict resolution.
- What are the steps in the process?
- Establish ground rules – suggested by you and by the parties involved – e.g., no yelling and no interrupting
- State the goal: to create a climate of safety and fairness that will allow closure on the problem
- Clarify the issue, e.g., the disturbance was a lease violation; the argument or fight created a danger to other residents and/or staff; the current conflict could escalate into a situation that is a lease violation and a danger to themselves or others
- Let each party tell his/her story without interruption
- Ask questions of clarification to try to bring out the underlying issues
- Ask the parties involved to suggest options that could resolve the issues
- Try out each of the options with the parties to find out what option will best resolve the issues
- Put whatever is agreed to in writing for all parties to sign
- If you reach an impasse at any point, or if any of the parties cannot adhere to the ground rules, end the session and offer to come back to it at another time

Mediation

Not everyone feels comfortable or competent in the role of conflict resolution, and some situations warrant outside help. Speak with your owner/agent about options to address conflict resolution where outside help is needed. Check United Way 211 for mediation resources.

B. EXCESS CLUTTER AND HOARDING

Housekeeping issues may or may not create a lease violation. It is important to distinguish between poor housekeeping that results in a messy, cluttered, dirty home, which is not necessarily a lease violation, and poor housekeeping that constitutes a health and safety hazard or destruction of property, such as flammable items on the stove or in the oven, rotting food, stopped up plumbing and other unsanitary conditions. These are lease violations. Housekeeping problems may first be reported by maintenance staff that is more frequently in residents' homes. Owners/agents should always follow up on these reports by going to the resident's home and evaluating whether the poor housekeeping constitutes a lease violation.

Hoarding Definition

Hoarding is collecting and keeping an excess of possessions (including animals) until they interfere with day-to-day functions, including home life, health, family, work, and social life; and so that functional parts of the home cannot be used for their intended purpose. Severe hoarding may also cause safety and health hazards.

Hoarding Disorder is now recognized as a mental health disorder and is listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM 5) manual. The hoarding behavior usually has been occurring for a long time and there is no quick solution. In addition, interventions without the individual's cooperation can make the problem worse. Serious safety and health risks may exist for the resident/s, as well as potential for damage to the property. Careful assessment of the individual situation is essential for a successful outcome. With increased awareness of the problem and increased resources, many management companies have developed protocols for dealing with hoarding.

Resources

The following links offer definitions, tools, supports and guides for those working with and/or living with Hoarding Disorder. Lease violations will also be relevant. It is essential that these situations be addressed when identified.

Clutter Image Rating Scale: http://www.hoardingconnectioncc.org/Hoarding_cir.pdf

[Clutter Image Rating Scale downloadable phone app: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/clutter-image-rating/id981642952?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/clutter-image-rating/id981642952?mt=8)

[Hoarding Fact Sheet: https://iocdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Hoarding-Fact-Sheet.pdf](https://iocdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Hoarding-Fact-Sheet.pdf)

Help for Hoarding: <https://hoarding.iocdf.org/>

Self-Help Tips and Techniques: <http://www.boards.org/sh.html>

CT Department of Public Health:

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3140&Q=581928&PM=1>

[CT State Agency Response for Hoarding](#)

Obsessive Compulsive Foundation: www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding.

Periodic training for staff is available through professional organizations listed in SECTION II. E. TRAINING.

Intervention

Owners/agents and RSCs should collaborate with the individual, family (when possible, permitted), and agencies such as mental health, elderly protective services, child protective services, code enforcement, inspectional services, animal control and, if necessary, the courts. If imminent risk, immediately contact appropriate code enforcement and protective service agencies for assistance.

- Contact the resident face-to-face
- Treat the resident with respect and dignity
- Respect the meaning and attachment to possessions by the resident
- Remain non-judgmental and factual
- Evaluate for health and safety. Explain specific health and safety issues to the resident.
- Make appropriate referrals
- Reassure the resident that others will try to help work with him/her
- Involve the resident in seeking solutions
- Consider whether the resident has a right to a reasonable accommodation, such as extended time for someone to work with the resident to mitigate

It needs to be made clear to the resident that excess clutter, which causes health and safety issues, constitutes a lease violation, and that the safety and health hazards must be addressed if the individual is to retain his or her tenancy. If the resident cooperates in trying to address the excess clutter problem, a timetable should be set (in collaboration with code officials, local social services and/or other agencies, if applicable) for the home to be free of safety and health hazards. If the resident does not comply with this timetable or does not agree to address the problem, it is important to work with local code officials to determine next steps. In some cases, the owner/agent may need to proceed with eviction.

- The owner/agent should send the resident written notice of the lease violation and a date, usually in two weeks, when the owner/agent will return to re-inspect the apartment. The notice should describe the current housekeeping problems and the standards that the resident is expected to meet. If code officials are involved, their deadline for minimally

satisfied mitigation will vary based on the severity and threat to health and safety to the individual or others.

For sites with RSCs, the letter should refer the resident to the RSC if the resident feels he or she needs assistance from an outside agency.

If the resident is eligible and appropriate, the RSC can refer the person for homemaking services through a local home care agency. Home care agencies will respond to the need for heavy chore service, particularly if a person's housing is in jeopardy. Home care service agencies may not be able to put in services until a certain level of mitigation is reached. This may require the assistance of commercial cleaning services, family and/or friends the resident allows to assist.

HOW THE SETTING AFFECTS SERVICES

Scattered Sites/Single Building

The approach to organizing, planning, and executing resident services is different in a scattered site setting from providing resident services in a single building or clustered setting. In scattered site housing, residents do not have the same access to the RSC – who may have a single office at one property, or who circulates among offices at different properties. Issues, and even the culture of the community, may be very different from one building to another. RSCs may need to plan travel time into their schedules. RSCs have more autonomy and less oversight in scattered site housing. Good organization, communication, and time management skills are essential for RSCs in this situation. Telephone and email can be important secondary means of communication with residents. Providing some activities that are site specific and some that are community-wide helps maximize the RSC's availability to residents who are dispersed geographically. Finding key residents at each building will help get the word out about programs, services, and activities as well as help foster a sense of community.

Rural/Urban Sites

Providing services is different in rural areas from urban and suburban locales. In general, urban areas have a larger service network. In rural housing, informal networks are very important – family, school, religious community, neighbors, etc. – to augment services that may not be available. Clustering services and finding individuals who might provide a fee for service tasks, such as grocery shopping or housekeeping, can help bridge the gap in rural areas or in urban areas where agencies may have waitlists.

V. APPENDICES

A. ONLINE AND TELEPHONE RESOURCES

Throughout this guidebook are various websites and telephone numbers that you can use for information and referral. This section is intended as a quick reference to these and other resources.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Multifamily-Service-Coordination-Guidance.pdf> - HUD's Multifamily Housing Service Coordinator Program Resource Manual

www.hud.gov/ - HUD website

www.nerscinc.org/ - New England Resident Service Coordinators and annual conference

www.servicecoordinator.org - the American Association of Service Coordinators

www.residentservices.org - the National Resident Services Collaborative – organizations working to increase and improve delivery of resident services to residents.

www.lisc.org – Local Initiatives Support Coalition

www.aecf.org – Annie E. Casey Fund

www.enterprisecommunity.org – Enterprise Foundation

www.babelfish.altavista.com – Free word or phrase translation

www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/ - Health and Human Services information on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

www.hudclips.org – Access to all HUD forms, handbooks and documents

www.zipcar.com/ - Zipcar – membership program for renting cars by the hour

www.samhsa.gov - for support and resources around issues of substance abuse and mental health.

www.helpguide.org - information and references on mental health, lifestyle, and aging issues.

www.ndvh.org - National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) is a 24 hour domestic violence hotline.

www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding - Obsessive Compulsive Foundation for information about hoarding.

Additional Resources

www.nmha.org is the website for the oldest and largest nonprofit mental health and mental illness organization.

www.nami.org is the website for the largest grassroots organization for people with serious mental illness and their families.

www.disability.gov links to the federal government's information and resources on disabilities.

www.Community-college.org – links to community colleges in every state.

www.gedtest.com – Information on the General Educational Development (equivalent to high school diploma).

www.childcareaware.org – Guidelines for finding quality childcare.

B. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

Sample Reasonable Accommodation Request Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

1. The following member of my household has a disability as defined below:
(A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of having such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.)
Name: _____

2. As a result of his/her disability, I request the following change or changes so that the person listed can live here as easily or successfully as the other residents. Check the kind of change(s) you need.
 A change in my apartment or other part of the housing complex
 A change in the following rule, policy, or procedure (Note: You may ask for changes in how you meet the terms of the lease, but everyone must continue to meet the terms of the lease.)

3. The household member needs this reasonable accommodation because the current physical design or rule or procedure prevents equal access in the following way:

4. You may verify the disability status and the need for this request by contacting:
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____

5. If you asked for a change to your apartment or to the housing complex, please use this space to list any company or organization that might help us to locate or build anything special that you need. (If you do not know of any, we will try to get this information ourselves.)

I give you permission to contact the above individual for purposes of verifying that I or a family member has a disability and needs the reasonable accommodation requested above. I understand that the information you obtain will be kept completely confidential and used solely to determine if you will provide an accommodation.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

C. LEGAL DEFINITIONS

Will

A Will is a written document that directs how a person wants their property distributed after death. In the Will the person also appoints a trusted person to be executor. The executor (or personal representative) is responsible for distributing properties according to the instructions in the Will.

Health Care Proxy

The Health Care Proxy is a simple legal document that allows a person to name someone they know and trust to make health care decisions for them if, for any reason and at any time, they become unable to make or communicate those decisions.

Power of Attorney

A power of attorney is a written document in which the "principal" appoints someone else, referred to as an "agent" or "attorney-in-fact," to act for him/her under certain circumstances. The principal decides how much responsibility he/she wants the agent to have. He/she can give his/her agent a wide range of powers — the ability to access bank accounts, sign income tax returns, sell stocks and manage real estate, for instance — or limit that person's authority to a single transaction. The principal also decides when the agent's powers begin and when they end. Depending on the circumstances, he/she may decide to go with a conventional power of attorney, a springing power of attorney or a durable power of attorney.

RSCs should not advise residents on Power of Attorney options. You may refer to this link [CT Powers of Attorney](#).

D. DESIGNING A RESIDENT SURVEY

Key questions to consider

Who is the "audience"? What are the demographics of the residents you will survey? Is it elders? Families? Single adults? Persons with disabilities?

What is your purpose? Is it to design a resident service program? Is it to get feedback on existing services? Is it a tool to obtain financial support for resident services or any combination of the above?

How will you conduct the survey? Will you mail it out? Will it be anonymous? Will you have interviewers meet one-on-one with residents? Will you offer incentives to residents who complete the survey?

How will you follow up? Will you hold a resident meeting to summarize the results? How will you use the results to help plan or improve resident services?

Suggestions

Keep the questionnaire as brief as possible to get the maximum return.

To facilitate tabulating responses, ask “Yes” and “No” questions and give options that can be checked off whenever possible. However, include space for respondents to fill in comments.

Make sure residents know that the survey is optional and that they do not have to provide any information that they don't want to share. If you are asking questions pertaining to the need or desire for services, assure both anonymity and confidentiality.

Keep the range of the survey within your intentions and anticipated ability to deliver programs and services. Avoid raising expectations that can't be met.

Share the collective results of the surveys with residents.

Know what your next steps will be after tabulating the results. Keep the momentum going.

Sample Cover Letter for RSC Satisfaction Survey

Dear Resident,

We are committed to delivering the best possible resident programs to the individuals and families that live in our development.

With this in mind, we have developed a brief questionnaire which evaluates the services of the Resident Service Coordinator at your site. Please take a few moments to complete it.

Once completed, please put it in the enclosed envelope, and drop it off in the Management Office. All completed questionnaires are confidential and you are not required to write your name on it.

Thank you very much for taking the time to help us evaluate our programs and services.

Your participation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

(insert name here)

Sample Resident Satisfaction Survey

Resident Satisfaction Survey

1. Do you know how to contact (insert name) your Resident Service Coordinator? **Yes** **No**
2. In the last year how many times have you talked with or requested assistance from the Resident Service Coordinator? **Never** **1 – 3** **4 – 6** **7 or more**

3. Please rate the following statements based on your experience:

- “The Resident Service Coordinator is”**
- | | Not True | Somewhat True | Very True |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Available and approachable to me and others by phone or in person. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Professional, polite and courteous to me and others. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Knowledgeable about services in the community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Responds to requests in a timely manner. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Have you attended one or more resident activities in the past six months? **Yes** **No**

Favorite activity_____

Least favorite activity_____

5. Do you receive a monthly newsletter? **Yes** **No**

Do you find the information in your monthly newsletter useful? **Yes** **No**

6. Are there any additional services / activities that you would like to see available? Please list: **Yes** **No**

Additional comments?

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding services and activities, please contact your Resident Service Coordinator at _____ . She/he will not see this survey.

E. SAMPLE INCIDENT REPORT

Incident and Observation Form

Please complete this form when an incident occurs which requires referral to or involves the Resident Service Coordinator. A copy of this form should be given to the Resident Service Coordinator.

Building Name: _____ Date of Incident: _____

Resident Name: _____ Unit #: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Address: _____

Circle Appropriate Incident:

Crime Medical Assist Condition observed General

Describe in detail what happened:

Was the police department contacted? Yes No What time? _____

Was the fire department contacted? Yes No What time? _____

Possibility of health issue? Yes No

Possibility of abuse/neglect? Yes No

Comments:

Action Taken:

Follow-up Required? Yes No

What is the follow-up and who is responsible for follow-up?

Signature of Reporter _____

Date _____

F. SAMPLE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

At initial occupancy, and through annual updates, (insert name here) requests some personal and health information from you. Providing us with this information is completely voluntary on your part. We request it in order to understand your situation and to coordinate services on your behalf, if necessary.

Our Resident Service Coordinator keeps a confidential file on each resident who has supplied such information and/or any resident with whom she or he has had contact for the coordination of services. All information collected is maintained in confidence under the requirements of state and general laws. However, in order to provide you with adequate and appropriate services, individuals, organizations and facilities may request pertinent information about you. *The files are the property of the Owner, and the Management Agent has access to them on a need-to-know basis.*

The information will likely include such things as:

- Your name, address, phone number and Social Security Number
- Medical insurance, hospital of choice, doctor's name and phone number
- Emergency contact person, other household members
- Health and medication information
- Extent of family help provided, type of assistance needed

YOUR RIGHTS: You have the right to:

- Inquire about where and how the information is maintained
- Object to the substance of the information collected and maintained
- Inspect (or photocopy at your expense) the contents of your file
- Request that certain information not be released to other organizations
- Request that certain family members not be contacted

G. SAMPLE RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I voluntarily authorize the release of information to be used by the Resident Service Coordinator to link me with programs and services that I may need or desire.

_____ (insert name here) the Resident Service Coordinator, is authorized to receive information pertaining to benefits or services provided to me. She or he is also authorized to provide information to the following service providers, individuals or organizations in order to access or maintain the services I desire or need.

This authorization will remain in effect for one year, and expires on _____ (insert date).

My _____ Emergency _____ Contact: _____

Other _____ Family _____ Member _____ or _____ Friend: _____

Legal Representative: _____ Therapist: _____

Physician: _____ Other: _____

I have the following restrictions on this release of information:

- It can only be used for issues related to my tenancy.
- It can only be used if I am incapacitated and cannot otherwise give consent at the time.
- It can only be used if my emergency contact cannot be reached.

I understand that the use of this information is strictly confidential, and that it may only be shared with those agencies and/or individuals indicated above and with State or Federal Agencies who may need this information to monitor the quality of services provided to me. I also understand that I have the right to revoke this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature of Individual 18 years of age or older

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian of Individual under 18

Date

I, _____, revoke this authorization of confidential information.

Resident or Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

H. SAMPLE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality means protecting another person’s right to privacy.

In order for residents to have trust in the relationship with the Resident Service Coordinator (RSC) at _____, (insert property name) it is important for you to know that the information you share with the RSC will not be communicated to anyone without your written release.

The Release of Confidential Information form is used to obtain this permission. The signed form allows the RSC to discuss your service needs and desires with community service providers, family members, physicians, and other individuals in order to link you to programs and services that may benefit you.

As your RSC, I agree to protect your right to privacy and confidentiality within the ethical and legal limitations of my position and profession.

The ethical and/or legal limitations to my promise of confidentiality include:

Adult Protection Services and Child Protection Services referrals. I am legally and/or ethically obligated to report those who have been subjected to physical abuse, neglect, or exploitation or who are living in hazardous conditions. Likewise, I am legally or ethically obligated to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to Department of Children and Families [DCF abuse/neglect reports](#) and elder abuse and/or neglect to Protective Services for the Elderly at the Department of Social Services during business hours at the toll-free line: 1-888-385-4225. After business hours or on weekends or state holidays, please call Infoline at 2-1-1. If you are calling from outside Connecticut, call Infoline 24/7 at 1-800-203-1234.

1. If I believe a child or elder is in imminent danger, I am legally or ethically obligated to report this to the local police department.
2. I may be required by law in a court action to reveal information shared with me or contained within my resident files.
3. I have a responsibility to my employer to report lease violations that come to my attention in the course of my duties.

RSC Signature

Date

I have read and understand this agreement:

Resident’s Signature

Date

I. SAMPLE OWNER/AGENT CHECKLIST

- Job Description/Organizational Chart
- Office Space
- Locked Filing Cabinet
- Computer and internet access
- Policies and Procedures
- Training Schedule
- CT RSC Resource Guidebook
- Roles and Responsibilities of RSC vs. Property Management
- Acknowledgment of Guidelines for RSCs (if applicable)
See exhibit on following page

Acknowledgement of Guidelines for Resident Service Coordinators

Exhibit 13.1.1g

Applicants seeking to include a Resident Service Coordinator (RSC) in the operations of the development must include the cost of the RSC in the operating budget of the property. If the Applicant intends to use a third party to provide these resident services, an operating agreement and a commitment of the funding to pay for these services must be provided. In addition, this signed acknowledgement of the following informational guidelines for employment of a qualified Resident Service Coordinator (RSC) must be provided with the Consolidated Application. Attach all required items and label as "Exhibit 13.1.1.g".

Property management and resident services can complement each other's roles with respect to resident issues. RSCs play an integral role on the property management team by:

- Enhancing the ability of residents to uphold their lease obligations, such as paying rent on time, taking proper care of the unit, and ensuring quiet enjoyment of the property for all residents and surrounding neighbors.
- Promoting self-sufficiency and encouraging residents to build on their strengths.
- Promoting programs and efforts that enhance a resident's quality of life and help build healthy communities.
- Coordinating community resources that benefit individuals and families.
- Promoting inclusion and tolerance by and for all residents and staff.

To achieve these goals, RSCs focus on key areas of service coordination and support considering the populations with whom they work. RSCs provide assistance in obtaining benefits and entitlements, as well as making referrals for services for such things as:

- Homemaking
- Health care
- Transportation
- Financial planning and management
- Mental health and substance use counseling
- Employment and education strategies, such as job counseling, training, and placement, child care, family management, GED, and English as a second language
- Food and nutrition, including home delivered meals
- After school and summer camp programs
- Safety and security, including personal safety
- Programs and activities to encourage engagement, socialization, and prevention

Applicants should provide the RSC private office space, separate from the management office, with a dedicated computer and online access. To be effective, RSCs must be able to talk confidentially – in person or by phone – with residents, families, providers, and staff. RSCs also need to maintain confidential records. The office needs to be accessible for people with disabilities and near a place where residents congregate naturally (e.g., the community room, frequented common areas, etc.).

For additional information and resources regarding resident services, please see the [Property Management Resources](#) page on CHFA's website.

To claim a point for an On-Site Resident Service Coordinator working a minimum of 20 hours per week, please indicate the following:

Amount budgeted for RSC: \$ _____ Funding Source: _____

Acknowledged by Applicant:

Name Title Date