

Shelter licensing requirements

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To: Constant, Christopher <christopher.constant@anchorageak.gov>; Zaletel, Meg <meg.zaletel@anchorageak.gov>

Cc: Kear, A [REDACTED]

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Chris and Meg,

Please find our comments regarding the new potential licensing requirements for shelters in Anchorage.

Our main feedback is regarding the following:

16.125.020 – Runaway overnight shelter license.

[FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES – MAY BE EXCLUDED FROM MOA LICENSING]

A runaway overnight shelter license shall hold a current valid state license for a residential program pursuant to AS 47.10.310 and regulations thereunder. In addition to the state requirements, a runaway overnight shelter shall:

- Adopt and enforce a good neighbor policy;
- Apply for a license or renewal thereof as set forth in 16.125.045B; and
- Meet the minimum standards set forth in 16.125.060.

As is indicated in the draft proposal, Covenant House Alaska requests exclusion from MOA licensing. CHA currently complies with State of Alaska Community Care licensing for our youth emergency shelter program at the Youth Engagement Center. This detailed 148-page licensing regulation covers everything from background checks, client safety, staff ratios, and cleaning procedures to pesticide use. If CHA should ever forgo a state licensure to serve a different age range of populations for shelter, we would comply with MOA licensure.

Also, we might have missed specific discussion on the need for transitional living facilities requiring licensure (16.125.025). Is this section needed because of a zoning (Title 21) requirement?

In our view, transitional living programs operate more like short-term rental assistance programs than homeless shelter programs. They are not low-barrier: entrants must apply and qualify. There is a high degree of freedom with a focus on employment and training. At Covenant House's Rights of Passage Transitional Living Program, which houses 25 young people, residents receive Sponsor Based Assistance Housing Vouchers, must undergo the AHFC screening process, and enter into a Landlord-Tenant Agreement. This program is not currently licensed, and adding the additional licensing requirements will incur greater costs that this program cannot afford.

Therefore, we also suggest that transitional living programs be excluded from this specific MOA licensing.

If you have any follow up questions, please respond to our CEO Alison Kear, copied here.

Thank you for all your work in improving our homeless response system!

Jason Hahn
Covenant House Alaska

