



**TRANSITIONAL
LIVING CENTER
RESIDENT
HANDBOOK**



Garden Gate Ranch Transitional Living Center Resident Handbook

MISSION: Garden Gate Ranch is a faith-based Christian organization providing safe housing and restorative and transitional services for sexually-exploited women and their children. We seek to rally our communities to ensure that all women are free from exploitation and abuse.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

GGR provides equal opportunity to all applicants for admission into the program without regard to age, race, creed, color, sex*, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, or disability of such applicants, unless based upon the nature of the program.

*GGR reserves the right to require that only adult female applicants (not including the applicant's children) are accepted into the program, where being an adult female is a bona fide qualification for the program. (A female is an individual identified as female at birth and has female body parts. An adult is an individual who is 18 years of age or older).

An applicant's denial or acceptance and progression in the program is not a decision made by a single employee. Still, it is a decision made collaboratively by GGR's Care Team.

Introduction:

Garden Gate Ranch's Transitional Living Center: Program Overview

Garden Gate Ranch's Transitional Living Center (TLC) bridges the gap between residential treatment and independent living. We provide a safe, stable, and restorative environment where single women with or without children can heal, rebuild their lives, and step confidently into a life of sustainable independence. Through trauma-informed care, individualized support, and a community rooted in compassion and faith, we walk alongside survivors as they rediscover their identity, dignity, and God-given purpose.

Our transitional structure meets each woman where she is, offering the time, tools, and support needed to pursue long-term stability and personal growth. During the initial **Reflect Phase**, we complete a thorough assessment of each woman's needs, strengths, and goals—ensuring her

program experience is tailored to her unique journey. The **Readiness Phase** is where the foundation is being built for education, workforce development, life-skills training, and holistic care. Residents gain the confidence and capability to thrive beyond their past. Then in the **Relaunch Phase**, we support survivors as they transition toward independence.

Garden Gate Ranch is not a crisis center or shelter, but a long-term, holistic solution for women ages 18 and older who have survived sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. For motivated adult women who are ready to step into a new life—pursuing their education, career goals, and personal healing—Garden Gate Ranch offers a safe and supportive place to begin. Through trauma-informed care, we cultivate a culture of compassion, acceptance, respect, and accountability. Garden Gate Ranch Transitional Living Center (TLC) provides the stable foundation survivors need to rebuild their lives and move confidently toward independence.

Garden Gate Ranch remains a steady presence, ensuring each woman has the support she needs to step boldly into her renewed life.

Requirements for Acceptance:

To be considered for entry into the **Garden Gate Ranch** transitional living program, applicants must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Have a **minimum of 60 days of sobriety**, verifiable through treatment records or provider confirmation and current clean drug test.
- Have applied for or possess **active Medicaid** to support ongoing medical and therapeutic care.
- Able to obtain **EBT/SNAP** benefits or currently have them.
- Be able to **provide medical and therapeutic records** from the previous 6 months.
- A completed satisfactory **background check**.
- Have or be able to obtain a state drivers license.
- Appropriate ID for employment.
- Single women
- Pregnant women and/or mothers who have children under 2 years of age.

TLC Three-Stage Program

1. Reflect Phase

The **Reflect Phase** provides stabilization, rest, and clarity. During this time, survivors have space to pause, breathe, and reflect on their next steps. During this phase, the resident and staff work together to design a tailored program to fit her needs. As each resident is at a different point in their healing journey, every resident will have a different schedule, different one-on-one counseling and classes. Collectively all residents will participate in devotionals, house meetings and general classes. GGR seeks to meet each resident where they are at and provide a program designed to promote accountability, honor, respect, trauma informed care, recovery and healing. Professionals complete a comprehensive assessment of physical, emotional, mental, educational, and relational needs to ensure each woman is fully supported and her desired pathway is being prepared for the journey ahead. This is a time that she reflects to determine if she is ready, committed, and prepared for the new life Garden Gate Ranch has to offer.

2. Readiness Phase

The **Readiness Phase** equips women with the foundational tools needed for long-term healing, stability, and independence. During this period, we focus on workforce development, life-skills training, and holistic care, helping residents gain the confidence and capability to thrive beyond their past. Survivors receive individualized services, including:

- Personalized education planning
- Medical and mental health care
- Trauma-informed therapy and counseling
- Workforce development and job placement
- Case management
- Obtain a state drivers license
- Restorative services and healthy relationship building

This phase strengthens each woman's stability, confidence, and readiness for independent living.

3. Relaunch Phase (Up to 2 Years)

The **Relaunch Phase** supports survivors as they transition toward independence. Over a period of up to two years, women receive:

- Career development and goal setting
- Financial literacy and budgeting
- Start and maintain a savings plan for future living expenses
- Life skills: housekeeping, food planning, and parenting skills
- Childcare assistance

- Obtaining a vehicle
- Community resources
- Educational opportunities such as GED preparation, post-secondary training and vocational education
- Job attainment services, such as career counseling and job placement
- Continued mentorship and community connection
- Future housing planning and transition support

Garden Gate Ranch remains a steady presence, ensuring each woman has the support she needs to step boldly into her renewed life.

Program Fee:

To help support you and bridge the gap between residential treatment and independent living we expect you to pay a program fee after the workforce Readiness is complete and you are actively in the workforce with employment. Fee applies at the first of the month following employment start date. This fee helps cover basic living expenses while in the program.

To help teach responsibility to every resident, we ask for you to cover the program fee with their own earned income instead of seeking assistance. This supports financial independence, personal responsibility, and confidence in managing their own resources while participating in the program.

The program fee is due by the 5th of each month. A fee of \$5 will be accrued each day the program fee is late.

To maintain your place in the program, fees must be paid as scheduled unless you have communicated with the Program Director and received approval for an alternative arrangement.

The Household Goods fee covers the basic cleaning and main household paper goods. Anything purchased without GGR staff approval will not be reimbursed. Once employment is established, each resident is expected to pay the monthly agreed upon fee and also asked to save money toward her exit strategy. As the cost of living increases and the transition out of the program into a new life requires a stable income; saving money will bring financial peace and a fresh start.

Please note: **Program fees or donations are non-refundable. If a resident chooses to leave or is discharged before the end of the month, no refunds will be issued.*

**Please note: GGR does not offer funds toward legal fines, court costs, drivers license fees, child support or back child support payments, unpaid parking tickets, DUI classes or bond payments. GGR does not use or supply funds to cover credit card debt or debt collections. GGR does not cover the cost of an out of pocket expenses for residents or their children. GGR does not pay personal cell phone bills or provide streaming services.*

Monthly Program Fee Structure:

Program Month	Monthly Program Fee (may be cash or paid online)	Household Goods Contribution	Total Monthly Cost
Month 1-3	\$300	\$25	\$325
Month 4	\$350	\$25	\$375
Month 5	\$400	\$25	\$425
Month 6	\$450	\$25	\$475
Month 7-12	\$500	\$25	\$525
Month 13-18	\$550	\$25	\$575
Month 19-24	\$625	\$25	\$650

Transitional Living Participation Requirements:

To support a structured, healing-centered environment, all residents at GGR transitional living center are expected to participate in a set of core activities designed to build community, foster personal growth, and maintain accountability in recovery. These requirements help create rhythm, safety, and connection within the home.

Program Expectations Include:

- **Community Meals:** Residents are expected to participate in *one* shared family-style meal per week. It may be on or off campus. These gatherings are an important part of building trust, community, and mutual support.
- **Weekly House Meetings:** A weekly *family meeting* is held for all residents and programming staff to discuss house updates, meal planning, household needs and celebrate progress together. Residents are expected to plan work around the weekly house meeting.
- **Weekly Therapy:** Residents are required to participate in *weekly individual therapy sessions* with a credentialed licensed therapist or counselor. Therapy is a key part of the healing process and provides a safe space to explore trauma, develop coping skills, and set recovery goals.
- **2 Times a Week Recovery Support:** Residents to attend a minimum of *two recovery-supportive meetings per week (1 may be on zoom; the other must be in person)*. These may include Celebrate Recovery, 12-step meetings (e.g., AA, NA), trauma support groups, peer support groups, or other programs that promote sobriety. If a group you choose is determined to be a hindrance to your healing process you may be asked to choose a different group. (not all recovery groups are equal)

Please Note: Program staff will determine which off-site meetings or appointments you attend based on scheduling needs, transportation capacity, and overall program priorities. We will make every effort to bring you to the meetings you prefer; however, attendance at specific meetings cannot be guaranteed.

- **Employment and/or Schooling (30 hours per week minimum/40 maximum):**

Residents will maintain 30-40 hours per week engaged in structured activities. This requirement may be met through employment, schooling, or a combination of these. We don't encourage more than 40 hours so other programming can be completed.

Please note that the monthly program fee still must be paid each month even if a resident is in school. Residents must provide their Program Director with appropriate documentation, such as employment verification and/or proof of class enrollment.

- **Weekly Peer Support:** Residents are expected to do weekly group meetings. These meetings will be discussed with the Program Director and Assistant Director.

- **Financial Budgeting:** To set you up for success, you will be asked to complete a full Financial Peace University course, or Survivors Guide to Money, whichever fits their personal situation and go over personal budget/financial future planning with designated volunteers or staff on a regular monthly basis. This is required for success in your transition to independence.

- **Monthly Care Team Meetings:** Residents will meet monthly with the CareTeam to discuss upcoming goals, express needs, celebrate wins, and to review previous month's goals.
- **Monthly community-living fee:** See the chart above for clarification. The fee will gradually increase over time. This incremental adjustment is designed to help residents transition smoothly into independent living and better prepare for local housing costs.

Proof of Participation:

Residents are asked to provide simple forms of accountability for their recovery meetings. This may include written reflections, a meeting signature sheet, or another version of “homework” that supports personal insight and responsibility. These details will be explained during orientation and discussed with your Care Team when necessary.

Participation in these program components is a **vital part** of community living at GGR. They are designed to respect individual healing journeys while holding the structure necessary for shared accountability and success.

Preparing to enter the Residential Program:

Please take time to thoughtfully consider what you desire to bring with you to GGR before arriving. Due to limited storage space, the number of personal items you may bring into the home will be restricted. As part of the admission process, staff will work with you to inventory and document all belongings you choose to bring.

Residents are ***limited to 2 large suitcases upon arrival***. This means they must have all of their belongings stored in two suitcases or duffel bags. Residents may come with an additional small backpack or purse. Any additional items brought to the home will not be allowed due to storage space, and staff may request residents to donate or store additional belongings before arrival.

Intake – Examine of Resident's Belongings:

Staff will conduct a thorough and respectful examination of all items you bring upon arrival. This review of personal belongings is a collaborative, non-threatening process designed to ensure your safety, comfort, and alignment with our program values. After inventory is completed, staff will kindly ask residents to wash all clothing brought with them.

Any items that are dangerous, inappropriate, or not aligned with our conservative Christian faith will be handled with care and discretion. You will be asked to store such items off-property or,

when appropriate, dispose of them on-site. All removed items will be documented in detail and stored or discarded according to policy. Staff reserves the right to determine which items may be kept in the home, including those placed in storage.

During intake, you will be supported in completing all necessary consent and program forms. This process is guided by trauma-informed staff and is intended to be respectful, collaborative, and as comfortable as possible for each resident.

Dress code at GGR:

You deserve to feel safe, respected, and comfortable in your own body. At Garden Gate Ranch, we follow a modest dress code to help maintain a respectful and supportive environment for everyone. If an item of clothing doesn't meet these guidelines, staff will kindly ask you to change and will help you store the item in your tote until you leave the program.

When attending social outings or visiting the education center, please choose clothing and footwear that are appropriate for a workplace setting. While you may dress more casually inside the home, we still ask that your clothing remain modest.

If you have any questions or would like clarification, the Assistant Program Director is always available to walk through the guidelines with you.

- Modesty is important. Modest clothing should sufficiently cover your chest (including cleavage), abdomen, and backside, especially when wearing tight-fitting clothing. (leggings, yoga pants etc)
- Clothing must not display offensive language, such as cursing, crude remarks, or racist messages. No LGBTQ+ words, images or symbols
- No satanic or demonic symbols such as pentagrams, satan, halloween (ghost, jack-o-lantern, witches)
- Attire must not indicate any affiliation with gangs through signs, colors, emblems, or symbols.
- Swimsuits should be one-piece and cover your backside, or a two-piece if your belly and backside are covered. (like shorts and long swim top)
 - They must not be transparent, so avoid wearing white or neon-colored items that may become see-through when wet.
- Excessive ripped or torn jeans are not permitted.
- When attending outings or going to the Ed Center, please wear clothing suitable for a professional environment.
 - Please refrain from wearing garments that are ripped or stained. Additionally, avoid wearing bedroom slippers, house shoes, hair bonnets, pajamas, or

sweatpants in the education center, public appointments, church, interviews and places of employment.

- If you choose to wear spaghetti straps, they must be worn underneath (or over) another piece of clothing with sleeves, such as a jacket or sweater, to ensure appropriateness.
- Shorts should be halfway between the knee and crotch. If they are tight, a shirt to cover your backside is required. Any shorts can be worn as pj's, but if tight and short shorts, your bathrobe must be on when leaving the bedroom.
- Bathrobes should be worn whenever you leave your bedroom without a bra on or if you're wearing short shorts.
- If you are outside of your bedroom in the evenings and are wearing your pajamas or comfortable clothing like a t-shirt and sweat pants or pajama pants, please refrain from going without a bra.
- Shoes, slippers, or socks with grips shall be worn in the house at all times to prevent slipping on the hardwood floors. This is also true for your children.

Weapons & Safety Items:

You have a right to feel safe in your environment. For the safety and well-being of all residents, staff, and visitors, all forms of weapons including sharp instruments such as knives, mace, tasers and firearms are strictly prohibited under all circumstances.

All other items that could reasonably be considered a weapon — including items not listed above — must be disclosed to and approved by staff prior to being brought into the home. Program staff reserves the right to restrict or remove any item deemed unsafe or inconsistent with program policies.

Faith-Based Environment:

This program is grounded in a conservative Christian faith, and our values, policies, and environment reflect that foundation. While residents are not required to be Christians or participate in religious activities. Residents are however required to attend weekly Church service, and it is your choice to participate or not. It is important to understand and respect the faith-based nature of the home. Holidays, activities and Items that contradict or conflict with our conservative Christian values—such as horror books, movies (nothing over PG-13), crystals, bones, tarot cards, spell/sorcery books/materials, occult symbols, or other spiritual artifacts—are not permitted in the residence or at the Transitional Living Center (TLC) at any time. The practice of witchcraft or related spiritual rituals is not

acceptable in any form. **Staff reserve the right to use discretion in determining whether an item is inconsistent with the values of the program and may ask for its removal if necessary.**

Urinalysis (UA) Policy:

You have the right to live in a sober and drug free environment. Residents may be required to complete urinalysis (UA) testing as part of transitional living compliance and to support a safe and sober living environment. UA tests may be conducted randomly or as deemed necessary by staff. Refusal to submit a sample or tampering with a test may result in disciplinary action or a review of the resident's program status.

A resident may be asked to have a pregnancy test completed for only the purpose to determine if GGR has adequate space to accommodate more children.

Failure to remain sober while in the program may result in dismissal. Residents are encouraged to reach out to staff or GGR partners for support, guidance, and resources if they have any concerns related to sobriety.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

You have a right to keep your presence at GGR confidential. GGR values and protects confidentiality of all residents' and GGR's information. For the program transitional living to work effectively, residents' must have confidence that information they provide will be safeguarded appropriately. This means that ALL location services are turned off on devices (phone, computers, smart watch, etc.) at all times while on property. This also means that no resident will be allowed to invite guests on property who are not GGR staff, GGR-affiliated volunteers, peer support coaches, or Uber service drivers. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis but *must* be approved by the Assistant Program Director or Program Director. **There is NO CIRCUMSTANCE where a resident invites and has any male, no matter the affiliation might be on GGR property.** GGR staff will take necessary disciplinary action if any of these rules are broken.

Resident Confidentiality and Information Security Expectations:

You have a right to keep your story, life and personal business confidential. Residents are expected to respect the confidentiality of meetings and communications with staff. Information shared during these meetings is intended for the resident and staff only and should not be shared with other residents. This helps prevent

misunderstandings or misrepresentation of information, and ensures a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

Curfew:

You have a right to be supported with safety, stability, and healthy routines, GGR enforces a **strict 9:00 PM curfew** every night, including weekends. We ask all residents to be inside the home by this time unless approval has been given by staff.

Adhering to curfew is part of maintaining trust and accountability within the community and helps all feel safe knowing the home is locked up before going to bed. Repeated violations or failure to comply may result in dismissal from the program.

Personal phones are to be turned in to the House Manager where she will store until morning.

GGR Volunteer Opportunities:

GGR volunteer opportunities are an important part of our mission, and you are welcome to participate. In order to participate in volunteer opportunities, residents must remain in good standing with the program by:

- Meeting employment requirements
- Following all program expectations and guidelines
- Staying current with their monthly program fee

Participation in volunteering may be paused if these requirements are not being met and will resume once the resident is back in compliance with program expectations.

Medical Services/Medication:

You have a right to medical services. GGR recognizes the importance of medical services, so you will be able to connect with the Assistant Program Director for a list of needed medical resources. You may choose to seek medical care wherever you desire, however, medical insurance is required. Iowa Medicaid is required while at GGR. If assistance to obtain insurance is needed, please seek the Assistant Program Director.

Upon arrival all medications will be inventoried, logged and a weekly organizer provided for you to have in a locked box in your room. All medications beyond a weekly supply will be locked in a locker strictly for your storage. You will meet with the Assistant Program Director weekly to refill. Once you are in the Relaunch phase you will have all access if you have

shown safety and are responsible for maintaining it.

A lock box will be provided to you for safety. All prescribed medications must be stored AT ALL TIMES in the locked box.

NOTE: Residents are responsible for administering, obtaining, and properly taking their own medications. GGR is not responsible for improper use/handling of medication. It is up to each resident to take it according to provider instructions.

Should an emergency arise, call 911.

Room Searches and Room Assignment:

Upon entry into the program, you will be assigned a room.

To support fairness, safety, and stability for everyone in the community, **room changes are not permitted.**

Garden Gate Ranch reserves the right to perform random room examination and search when necessary to maintain a safe and healthy environment. Residents are expected to keep their rooms neat, orderly, and free of prohibited items.

Candles are not allowed. Please avoid the use of open flames such as candles, portable stoves/space heaters, or any other items that pose a fire hazard.

All meals must be consumed at the dining tables only. Meals/food/snacks are not permitted in the living rooms, library, prayer room, bedrooms, bathrooms, the office or in any GGR vehicles. Please do not remove GGR mugs or dishes from the house or office.

Smoking:

You have a right to live in a healthy, smoke free environment. Smoking will not be allowed on the GGR property in any form.

Vaping:

Vaping is permitted on the property but there is a separate code of conduct that will need to be signed and followed.

Transportation:

One of our goals for you at GGR is for each resident to be independent and have her own

vehicle upon arrival or shortly after. Everyone is responsible for managing their own transportation upon entry of the transitional living phase of the program. Available options include personal vehicles, ministry vehicles upon approval and availability, ride share with another resident (upon approval) and ride-share services such as medicaid transport and mileage reimbursement. You must have a current drivers license and insurance to operate any motor vehicle. We encourage you to preplan and set rides up in advance if at all possible. Last minute needs may not be possible.

Residents may contact volunteers with prior approval from the Assistant Program Director. Volunteer transportation services are intended solely for essential needs or appointments that residents are unable to access independently.

Residents may be approved to use Garden Gate Ranch vehicles after demonstrating consistent integrity, responsibility, and adherence to all GGR program rules. When program staff determine that a resident has met these expectations, the resident will be scheduled to complete a defensive driving class with the Program Director.

Approval for vehicle use is not guaranteed and will be granted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of program staff.

Financial Planning Program Requirement:

We believe that learning to manage finances confidently is an important step toward long-term independence and stability.

Each resident must complete one of the following:

- Participation in a full Financial Peace University course or
- Survivors Guide to Money, and
- Go over personal budget/financial future planning with designated volunteers or staff on a regular monthly basis.

This requirement must be started immediately upon obtaining a job. Please seek out program director or assistant program director if you have any questions about this requirement. GGR staff are happy to provide information regarding where Financial Peace University courses are offered. You may also connect with a mentor if you would rather meet with one to meet your budgeting requirement.

Behavior Interventions:

You have a right to live without the threat of violence. Given the voluntary nature of the placement of women into our transitional home, should the need to address negative behaviors arise, the following procedures have been implemented:

- 1) First seek to resolve the issue just between you and the respective resident.
Gossip, hostility and controlling behavior will not be tolerated in the home. Seek reconciliation in a peaceful manner.
- 2) If issues persist, consult with the assigned Program Staff to discuss solutions.

As GGR is community living, there will be zero tolerance of controlling or hoarding any items that belong to GGR. We expect all residents to honor the opportunity of being in our program with respect and dignity toward others.

Given that the purpose of the program is healing and recovery, we expect all residents to honor that healing process of not only their own journey but those around them that are also recovering. We encourage all of our residents to be considerate, supportive and kind to each other.

Physical and verbal threats are not acceptable behaviors at GGR. Unresolved and ongoing issues may result in discharge from the transitional living home. While staff are committed to supporting each resident's healing process, mistreatment, disrespect, and other inappropriate behaviors are not tolerated. These behaviors may result in immediate discharge from the program. In the event of a discharge, staff will transport the resident to the nearest crisis shelter for safe placement.

Any form of sexual behavior can not and will **NEVER** be tolerated. The client will be asked to leave the home immediately.

Your Responsibility:

- You have the responsibility to treat everyone with respect and dignity. This includes but not limited to, all staff, volunteers, visitors, your fellow house mates, all children, and animals. This includes physical, verbal and sexual threats and/or comments. No name calling, inappropriate language and elevated voice volume. No throwing of any items or slamming doors. Disrespectful behavior may result in losing your place at GGR.
- It is important to carefully consider your words to avoid potentially harm to a fellow resident to recall painful, past memories that could cause great discomfort.

- Residents should discuss trauma, past harm, or deeply personal experiences **only with counselors, therapists, or designated staff**. To protect the emotional safety of the home, residents are asked to avoid sharing traumatic details with peers, as this can unintentionally overwhelm or distress others. We encourage all residents to practice healthy boundaries and refrain from disclosing private or sensitive
- You have the responsibility to know and follow the GGR TLC guidelines which have been established for your safety, the safety of others, and harmonious living.
- You have the responsibility, along with the GGR staff to set goals for yourself.
- You have the responsibility to be honest with yourself and staff regarding your personal situation and to share information that will assist the staff in planning and coordinating services to be provided to you.
- You have the responsibility of signing appropriate releases of information to allow staff to better assess your current situation and to lead to development of goals. Refusal to sign releases of information needed for your treatment may result in dismissal from GGR.
- You have the responsibility of signing an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) upon arrival. This agreement ensures that all confidential information shared within GGR is protected and treated with the highest level of importance.
- You have the responsibility to examine all available information and to make choices for yourself.
- You are responsible to express your ideas and opinions in a reasonable and appropriate manner, to be tolerant of ideas and opinions that may be different from your own.
- You are expected to honor the generosity of the donors and partners who make Garden Gate Ranch's programs, housing, and resources possible. All services, supplies, and opportunities provided through GGR are the result of faithful stewardship, careful budgeting, and the sacrificial giving of individuals who believe in each resident's healing and future.
- You are responsible for treating all property, resources, and program offerings with gratitude, respect, and care, recognizing that nothing is owed or guaranteed, and that each provision reflects the trust placed in them by the GGR team and its supporters.
- Residents are required to disclose and provide access to the remaining balance of their EBT funds upon entry into the program. This allows Garden Gate Ranch staff to help steward each resident's resources wisely, ensure essential needs are met, and prevent situations where funds are withheld or unaccounted for. This practice supports financial integrity, promotes responsible budgeting, and ensures that all provisions offered through GGR are used appropriately and in alignment with donor-supported program

goals.

- Residents are personally responsible for financial obligations and must communicate adequately with staff regarding any financial needs with ample time to allow planning and accommodations. Residents must refrain from requesting from staff or volunteers for financial assistance of any kind.

Trauma Dumping:

Garden Gate Ranch is committed to creating a safe, stable, and supportive environment for every resident. Because conversations about past trauma can unintentionally cause distress or trigger painful memories for others, we ask all residents to be mindful of how personal experiences are shared.

Residents should discuss trauma, past harm, or deeply personal experiences only with counselors, therapists, or designated staff, rather than with other residents. Sharing traumatic details with peers—often called *trauma dumping*—can overwhelm others, create emotional strain, or unintentionally cause harm.

We encourage all residents to practice healthy boundaries by avoiding the disclosure of private, sensitive, or deeply personal information that may feel demeaning or overly heavy for others to carry. Respecting one another's emotional space helps maintain a home environment where everyone can heal, grow, and feel secure.

Chores:

You have a right to a clean and physically safe environment. Each resident will be assigned daily, weekly and monthly chores to help maintain a clean and safe environment for all. The Assistant Program Director will be responsible for initiating a home chore plan.

Food:

You will have the opportunity to purchase your own food. You will be assigned a respective food cabinet and refrigerator space. There will be a community meal once weekly to promote community connection. GGR will provide the protein for the meal and all residents will share equally to provide any additional ingredients. Program Directors will supply information and referrals to resources such as food pantries, food assistance programs, and additional community services available to you. Food stored on-site at Garden Gate Ranch is reserved for residents who **do not** receive EBT assistance. Because these items are provided through donor generosity, any use of on-site food by residents with or without EBT benefits requires **prior authorization** from program staff.

Pets/animals:

Personal pets are not allowed at GGR. GGR has a ranch dog (Fuzzy) that lives at the property. Care for the animals are included in the resident chore rotation. Animal neglect and abuse will not be tolerated. To help maintain a safe, healthy, and comfortable living environment for everyone, pets are only permitted in the common areas, never in your bed/bath rooms.

Romantic Relationships:

To support you in focusing on your personal growth, goals, and overall well-being while in the program, **you are expected to refrain from engaging in romantic relationships** during your time at GGR. This policy is in place to help maintain a safe, supportive, and distraction-free living environment for everyone.

Staff will strictly enforce this guideline to ensure that all residents have the space and stability needed to work toward their goals.

Staff are available to provide guidance, support, and resources around healthy relationships and personal boundaries.

Resident Conduct during Off-Site Meetings:

Residents are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects respect, safety, and unity while participating in any off-site meetings, appointments, or activities coordinated by Garden Gate Ranch. The following guidelines apply to all off-site outings:

- **Stay Together as a Group** — Residents must remain with the assigned staff member and group at all times. Wandering off, separating from the group, or leaving the designated area is not permitted.
- **Follow Staff Direction Promptly** — Residents are expected to listen carefully, respond respectfully, and follow instructions given by program staff throughout the outing.
- **Use Appropriate Communication** — Communication with staff, peers, and community members should remain respectful, calm, and appropriate. Residents should avoid confrontational language, oversharing personal details, or discussing program matters publicly.
- **No Unscheduled Stops** — Off-site meetings follow a planned schedule. Residents may not request additional stops (stores, restaurants, errands, etc.) outside of what has already been arranged by staff.

- **Maintain Professionalism** — Residents should conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively on themselves and the program, including appropriate dress, behavior, and interactions.
- **Respect Time and Transportation** — Residents must be ready to leave when instructed, return to the vehicle promptly, and honor the schedule set by staff.
- **Protect Privacy** — Residents should avoid discussing other residents' stories, program details, or sensitive information in public settings. All residents will refrain from disclosing where they are staying to people outside of the GGR staff. For example, do not tell anyone you are living at GGR for safety reasons for everyone at the Ranch.

Visitation:

We recognize that maintaining healthy, supportive relationships can be an important part of healing and rebuilding life after trauma. We also understand that visits can be triggering or unsafe without proper structure. This Visitation Policy is designed to support client safety, privacy, and autonomy while providing a respectful and secure environment for all residents.

During the **Reflect and Readiness Phase** no visitation will be rewarded.

The **Relaunch Phase** as follows:

Out-of-State Visitation:

Out-of-State visits may be permitted on a case-by-case basis, with prior approval from the GGR Care Team staff and CEO. Approval will depend on the resident's progress, safety considerations, and the purpose of the visit. All travel plans must be submitted in writing at least two weeks in advance. UA tests will be conducted upon residents returning to the home.

In-State Overnight Visitation:

Overnight off-campus visits are allowed with **family members only** and are subject to prior approval. Residents must submit a request at least **two weeks in advance**, providing details such as the location, the family member they will be staying with, and the purpose of the visit. This allows time for staff to review the request and ensure it aligns with the resident's safety and well-being.

Residents are trusted to make responsible decisions regarding their visits. Any unauthorized overnight stays or failure to return as agreed may result in a review of future visitation privileges and/or continued participation in the program. Upon return you will be asked to do a urinalysis and expected to pay the cost of the test.

In-House Visitation:

To ensure a safe, respectful, and healing environment for all residents, **in-house visits are limited to approved GGR staff and affiliated ministry partners.** These individuals may visit for support, programming, or check-ins and will follow house guidelines during their time on site. **Male visitors are not allowed inside the residence unsupervised by a GGR staff leader at any time or on the property,** to honor the safety and comfort of all residents.

While we limit who enters the home to protect confidentiality and the shared space, we support residents in developing healthy relationships and social connections. We encourage residents to meet with friends, family, and mentors in public places off-site, empowering them to manage their own boundaries and safety. Staff are available if support or guidance is needed, but we trust residents to make choices aligned with their recovery and personal growth.

GGR Transitional Living – Phone & Electronics Policy

At GGR, we recognize that phones and electronics play an important role in communication. For the first 30 days, we ask that all residents turn in their cell phones to staff. All residents have access to an on-site phone during designated business hours, to make outgoing calls to those approved from a safe contact list and to other agencies. We do not allow cell phone use in the house, only in the office. No cell phones will be permitted on-site for personal use without approval to do so. For the guaranteed safety of all residents and staff, we do not permit cell phone use with 24 hour access. In case of emergency, staff is on-site to help with contacting the necessary authorities.

Arrival & Storage

Upon arrival, all personal cell phones and electronic devices—including smart watches—will be stored in the APH office for safety.

If you do not have a phone, a GGR phone will be provided for necessary calls. You are expected to obtain your own phone as soon as you are able. For your safety, you may want to choose to change your phone number.

Upon entering the program, residents who bring a purse or personal bag will be required to briefly empty its contents and show them to staff. This standard procedure helps ensure the safety, integrity, and consistency of the program from the very beginning. Please note that residents may also be required to complete this same belongings check after any off-site outings

to maintain a secure and trustworthy environment for everyone in the home.

Phone Access

Residents will have designated time slots during the day to check out their phone for approved appointments and safe contacts.

Communication: For your safety and the safety of all residents at GGR, no resident is permitted to communicate via mail, email, social media or telephone with their trafficker or abuser or communicate (written or telephone) with anyone who is incarcerated or in a romantic relationship prior to coming to GGR.

Phase Guidelines:

Reflect Phase

- Personal cell phones are not permitted unless deemed necessary and used under supervision.
- Computers may be used in the Education Center with supervision.

Readiness Phase

- Personal cell phones and computers may be used for appointments, job searches, and communication with safe contacts, provided all guidelines are followed.

Relaunch Phase

- Full daytime use of personal cell phones and electronics is allowed.
- Phones are not allowed in your bedroom or bathroom.
- Any GGR staff has the right to check your cell phone call logs, pictures, and internet history for compliance.

Please note: once you have transitioned to one of our cottages, we will review and discuss the expectations for your cell phone and electronics usage. These guidelines are not phase-based but determined on an individual basis.

Safety & Privacy Requirements

- **Location Services:** Must remain off at all times while on GGR property.

- **Photos/Videos:** No photos or video recordings inside the home or in the front of the house. Photos may be taken in the backyard only for your personal use and not to be shared on electronic devices.
- **Personal Use Only:** Your phone is for your use only and may not be shared with another resident.

Daily Storage

All phones and electronics must be turned in to the House Manager each evening before curfew and will be returned the following morning.

Accountability

If a staff member determines that a resident is being distracted from her responsibilities due to phone or electronic use, she may be required to turn in her device immediately upon returning home.

Social Media Policy – Reflect, Readiness, and Relaunch Phases

Reflect & Readiness Phases

During the Reflect and Readiness phases, **no social media use is permitted**. This restriction is in place to support healing, reduce distractions, and ensure the safety and privacy of all residents and staff.

Relaunch Phase

After completing social media safety training, residents may create a **new** social media account. Keeping or reactivating previous accounts is not allowed, as past connections or content may compromise safety. Residents will be asked to discontinue old accounts and begin fresh with new, approved ones.

All social media activity must remain **appropriate, respectful, and aligned with Garden Gate Ranch's values**. The safety, privacy, and well-being of everyone in the program must be prioritized at all times.

Residents will be required to provide staff with the names of **all** social media accounts—public and private.

Expectations for Responsible Use

We trust our residents to use their phones and electronic devices responsibly, understanding that these guidelines exist to protect everyone's safety and privacy. All social media content

must remain **professional in nature** and reflect the standards of Garden Gate Ranch.

Any violation of this policy—including sharing private information, contacting unapproved individuals, or posting inappropriate content—will be reviewed by staff and may result in consequences such as:

- Loss of cell phone or electronic device privileges
- Additional restrictions
- Program consequences, up to and including dismissal

Internet Use Guidelines:

Appropriate Use

Residents are encouraged to use the internet for positive and productive purposes, including educational research, job searches, and personal development. To maintain a safe and supportive environment, residents are asked to avoid websites that promote violence, illegal activities, or explicit content. Any online activity that compromises the safety or wellbeing of the home or others is strictly prohibited.

Monitoring and Boundaries

The internet can be a valuable tool, but it can also present risks. If a resident's internet use leads to distress, unsafe situations, or exposure to inappropriate content, staff will intervene to address the concern and provide support.

Responsibility and Privileges

We trust residents to use the internet responsibly and in ways that support their growth, healing, and safety. Misuse of internet access or behavior that violates program safety or privacy standards may result in a review of internet privileges and, if necessary, could lead to dismissal from the home.

House Locks, Alarm and Gate Access:

To maintain the safety and integrity of the program home, **the front door code and the location of the house are strictly confidential** and must not be shared with anyone, including visitors, family members, or individuals outside of the approved program staff. Residents are responsible for ensuring that the home remains secure by locking doors and windows by curfew. Report any security concerns to staff the Property Manager.

The Property Manager will unlock the house and unarm the alarm and open the gate every morning no later than 7:00 am. She will check all doors are secure, arm the alarm and shut gate at curfew 9:00 pm

Property location: Sharing the house location with unauthorized individuals is a serious breach of program policy and will result in consequences, including a review of program participation.

Personal Lock Boxes:

Each resident will be provided with a personal lock box to securely store medications, important documents, or other small personal belongings. Lock boxes are intended to promote safety, privacy, and a sense of ownership during your stay. Return the lock box for the next resident upon discharge.

Mail:

Residents will have the opportunity to sign up for a Safe at Home address for all personal mail to provide safety and protect the confidentiality of the house location. However, Amazon packages and other online deliveries will be sent to a Leadership Staff's address. Residents are responsible for purchasing their own stamps and mailing supplies.

Clients are informed of their rights and responsibilities during intake. You will receive a signed copy of these rights, and GGR staff will keep a copy in the resident's file.

Chain of Command:

To maintain respect, order, and accountability within the home, concerns should be addressed through the following chain of command. In alignment with our Christian values, we encourage residents to first seek direct communication and reconciliation with respective resident(s) or staff member(s) whenever possible.

1. **Direct Resolution** – If an issue arises, first address it directly with the individual involved in a respectful and constructive manner.
2. **Assistant Program Director** – If the issue cannot be resolved, bring it to the Assistant Program Director for support and guidance.
3. **Staff Consultation** – If additional support is needed, the Assistant Program Director will bring the matter directly to the Program Director.
4. **Director Review** – If the matter remains unresolved or requires higher authority, program staff will escalate the concern to the Operations Director.

5. **Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Review** – As a last resort, the director may consult the organization’s CEO to address the issue. Permission from both the Director and Assistant Director is required before any matter is elevated to this level. Residents are not permitted to contact the program CEO directly for any reason, except in the case of a life-threatening emergency.

This process is designed to ensure that concerns are handled respectfully, efficiently, and at the appropriate level. **Failure to utilize the above chain of command will result in behavioral agreement.**

Respectful Conduct Toward Staff and Residents:

Garden Gate Ranch maintains a safe, stable, and respectful environment for everyone in the home. The following behaviors are not tolerated under any circumstances:

- Staff Triangulation — attempting to pit staff members against one another or seeking conflicting answers to avoid accountability.
- Staff Manipulation — using coercive, deceptive, or pressuring behaviors to influence staff decisions.
- Hostility or Aggression — verbal, physical, or intimidating behavior toward staff or residents.

Aggressive behavior is considered unacceptable and unjustifiable. Any incident of serious aggression may result in immediate termination from the program.

If a mandatory discharge occurs, staff will coordinate relocation to a local crisis shelter to ensure the resident has a safe place to go upon exit.

Drug/Alcohol Testing Policy and Procedure:

Drug/Alcohol screening and testing is a required part of the GGR program. In the transitional home, drug screening is a critical element in maintaining a safe, drug-free environment for everyone. Regular drug testing is discussed, using motivational interviewing, with the client at intake.

Garden Gate Ranch supports client recovery with drug/alcohol screening to verify compliance with treatment and to assess or reassess client’s need for clinical interventions. The program conducts a drug screening at intake, as clinically indicated.

Exiting From the Program:

A resident may exit the GGR's transitional living home when she feels ready for her next chapter. GGR staff asks residents to connect with the Program Director to discuss a discharge plan several weeks before move out date. Residents may live at the GGR transitional home for ***up to 24 months after employment has been achieved*** as long as all program requirements are being followed.

GGR reserves the right to discharge residents from its transitional living home under (but not limited to) the following conditions:

- *Violent behavior or sexual behavior**
- *Possession of contraband**
- *Repeated violations of rules**
- *Disclosure of property whereabouts to trafficker/abuser**
- *Violations of the substance use policy**
- *Expressions of harm to self or others**
- *Persistent disrespectful *in any form* or hostile behavior toward staff or fellow residents**

Discharge Procedure:

A resident is considered discharged once they have left the program, whether the departure is voluntary or at the request of program staff. At the time of discharge, staff will provide the resident with a reasonable timeframe to gather personal belongings. Once this period has passed, the resident may not return to the program home or campus without direct permission from the Program Director.

Following discharge, all communication must be directed to the Program Director. Once discharged, we ask that you do **not** contact other staff members, residents, or volunteers regarding program matters. Reach out to the Program Director if needed.

Residents are highly encouraged to take all personal belongings upon departure. If not, they relinquish the right to any food, clothing, or personal items left behind once they leave the program home.

These policies are in place to ensure clarity, fairness, and the continued safety and stability of the living environment.

Residents Grievance:

Upon admission, you will be provided with a copy of the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices, which shall include designated contact information regarding grievances/privacy complaints and also a copy of the grievance/privacy complaint procedure. The Grievance and Privacy Complaint forms are in an accessible location to be determined by the GGR Program Director, accessible to residents without request. When a client has a grievance or complaint, the following steps are involved to resolve the issue:

Residents are encouraged to first discuss a complaint with the involved staff members. If the issue remains unresolved, residents may file a written grievance/privacy complaint when they feel their rights have been violated or they are dissatisfied with the services provided. The complaint can be mailed, scanned, or delivered to the address listed on the form.

The staff designated for grievance resolution/ assignment of resolution will review the complaint with the resident, staff and/or any relevant witnesses.

Any grievance/privacy complaint that cannot be resolved at the initial attempt level will be forwarded to the secondary attempt level, applicable to the home.

Any grievance/privacy complaint that continues to go unresolved will be forwarded to the agency Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will research the issue and gather any additional information necessary.

At each level of resolution, the following steps will be followed:

The above staff receiving the grievance/privacy complaint shall initiate the gathering of preliminary information within 72 hours, with resolution occurring within 5 days. The facts gained from any research will be documented on the written grievance/privacy complaint.

The resolution, when reached, will be documented on the written grievance/privacy complaint, and be signed by the resolving staff and the resident.

After the grievance/privacy complaint is resolved, the designated staff will file and maintain a log of all individual grievance/privacy complaints.

All resolved grievances/privacy complaints are to be retained for a period of at least six years

from the date of creation and shall contain no individually identifiable health information other than that provided by the individual filing the grievance/privacy complaint. Garden Gate Ranch leadership, Board and/or staff shall not retaliate in any way against any individual for voicing a grievance/privacy complaint with the agency.

TLC House Policies attached in link

[RESIDENT POLICIES](#)

STAFF - Keep this last page (store it in resident's file)

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Agreement:

I have received and reviewed the current version of the **Garden Gate Ranch Transitional Living Center Program Handbook**.(revised 06/2026) I understand the expectations, policies, and procedures outlined within, and I agree to follow them during my participation in the program. I understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in consequences, including possible dismissal from the program.

By signing below, I acknowledge my responsibility to uphold the standards of the Garden Gate Ranch community.

Resident Name (Print): _____

Resident Signature: _____

Date: _____

#1 Staff Witness (Print): _____

Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____

#2 Staff Witness (Print): _____

Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____