



# **Life Builders**

# **Resident Handbook**

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## **WELCOME TO LIFE BUILDERS!**

**Life Builders, Young Adult Transitional Living Program is available for young adults who fall within the age range of 18 through 24 when they enter the program. In order to apply a young adult must fill out an application, write an autobiographical essay and meet with the Services Coordinator. After completing those steps, the young adult will meet with a committee for an interview in which KIHA determines if the applicant and the Life Builders Program are a good match.**

We are glad you have chosen to participate in Life Builders. Entering a new program can be difficult and, at times, overwhelming. We wrote this handbook for you. This handbook outlines what you can expect from Life Builders and what Life Builders expects from you. This is an agreement between you and the KIHA: Tenant and landlord. Our goal is to provide an environment that is realistic and provides the skills necessary to achieve independence. If this handbook does not address all your questions, please do not hesitate to ask staff for clarification. Staff is here to assist and support you. Please keep this handbook for your reference.

Life Builders is a transitional living program designed to provide you with the opportunity to pursue employment, education and vocational goals in a safe and healthy environment. It is our hope that when the time comes for you to leave the program, you will have saved money and learned new skills, which are necessary to achieve successful independent living.

**We are happy to welcome you to the community of Life Builders!**

## **Resident Rights and Responsibilities**

As a resident of Life Builders, you are guaranteed the following rights:

- Right to live in an alcohol-and drug-free environment.
- Right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
- Right to work with staff on an individualized case plan.
- Right to be assured confidentiality.
- Right to be given reasonable privacy consistent with the need for safety.
- Right to be assured freedom from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any corporal punishment.
- Right to be assured that any search and seizure is carried out in a manner which is consistent with program standards and only to clearly insure the safety, security, and well being of residents and staff.
- Right to be assured the opportunity to reside at Life Builders for up to eighteen months, with up to six months of aftercare provided.

Your responsibilities as a resident of Life Builders are to:

- Take full advantage of this opportunity to grow.
- Respect yourself, other residents, staff, and the Life Builders' home.
- Follow the program structure and guidelines that have been presented to you.
- Learn to live independently and successfully.

Life Builders will provide you with the opportunity to achieve:

- Vocational development- vocational skills will be updated and advanced through a series of workshops, groups, and other training.
- Basic needs- through the provision of secure housing and access to services in the community.
- Educational development- through assistance with vocational and academic schools, private tutoring, vocational testing, and remedial assistance.
- Emotional support- through group counseling on substance abuse and other issues; and stable, adult relationships with staff, mentors, and fellow residents.
- Social skills development- through instruction in daily living and self-care skills.

- **Financial Management-** through workshops instruction will be given on budgeting, banking, paying expenses, determining needs and wants.
- **Healthy Living-** through workshops and activities residents will develop health awareness and good health habits. Emphasis is placed on exercise, recreation, nutrition, and development of meal planning and cooking skills.

### **New Resident Status: Orientation**

The **first 3 weeks** of your entry into Life Builders, you are under New Resident Orientation Status. This **3 week** period will allow new residents to adjust to living in the Life Builders community. During this **time** you are expected to attend activities with the live in staff which focus on getting to know you, you getting to know us and the program, and becoming comfortable with your housemates. These activities and workshops start at 8 pm and last **3 weeks**. Any special needs should be discussed with your Case Manager (CM). After this orientation period, staff will let you know when you will be needed for participation in workshops and activities.

During the orientation phase you will also participate in an intake process that will include the following:

- a. Reviewing the Resident Handbook
- b. Obtaining necessary legal documents (release forms, social security card, ID, etc.) **You are required to sign a release of information for staff to talk with others who are involved in your life, program or treatment.**
- c. Life Skills Assessment
- d. Job Skills Assessment
- e. Education Assessment (If you do not have a completed High School Diploma or GED)
- f. Mental Health/Substance Abuse Assessment (Based on the assessment, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment may be a condition of your case plan at Life Builders.)

Once your orientation has been completed, a case plan will be developed between you and your case manager. Your case plan is an individualized plan specifically designed to develop skills necessary for successful independent living. Your case plan will define your goals and the necessary skills needed to achieve those goals.

**Expectations of YOU:**  
**Landlord/Tenant Agreement**

As a resident of Life Builders, you are granted privileges and entrusted with responsibilities. As part of your commitment to the program, there are several expectations of you:

**Weekly meeting with your Self Sufficiency Coordinator:**

You are expected to make and keep an appointment with your **Self Sufficiency Coordinator** on a weekly basis. The purpose of meeting regularly with your **SSC** is to maintain open communication around your goals and progress at Life Builders. At these meetings, you and your **SSC** will discuss any issues of concern. You will also develop a **Self Sufficiency Plan**, outlining your current goals and priorities. **This** may include your employment, financial stability, and independent living skills. It is your responsibility to schedule your weekly appointment with your **SSC**. Finally, you are asked to turn in a copy of your pay stub to KIHA each time you receive a paycheck. This is necessary to accurately determine the amount of your monthly rent.

**Education**

Life Builders believes education is the doorway to self improvement and self sufficiency. If you have not graduated from high school or obtained a GED, you are required to enroll in the education program of your choice and successfully complete your secondary education.

If you are interested in post secondary education or training, you are expected to discuss this with your **Self Sufficiency Coordinator** and design a plan to reach your post secondary goals. Your self sufficiency coordinator will assist you in accessing post secondary opportunities. Education hours count with employment hours to reach the mandatory 30 hours of work per week.

**Employment:**

Maintaining secure employment is a primary component of Life Builders, as well as an important life skill. You are expected to maintain full-time employment or part-time employment/education classes or training (minimum = 30 hours/week) while you are a resident of Life Builders. You are also expected to communicate openly and honestly with your self sufficiency coordinator regarding your employment. If you are having problems at work, or if you lose your job for any reason, you are expected to inform your **SSC** promptly.

### Unemployed Resident Status:

If at any time during your stay at Life Builders, you lose your job, you will be under Unemployed Resident Status. Residents are expected to gain full-time or part-time employment within two weeks, or face consequences, including suspension or discharge. While unemployed, you will be required to abide by an 8:00 pm curfew.

Upon losing your job, you will meet with the Self Sufficiency Coordinator as soon as possible. Residents who are job-searching will be required to attend Job Group each morning at 9:30 am at Life Builders. You will be required to job search full time Monday-Friday from 9:30am-4:30pm or be at the home doing house chores when not actively seeking employment.

Upon gaining full-time or part-time employment, your early curfew will be lifted.

### Rent:

Rent is determined according to your monthly income. Therefore, it is necessary that you turn in a copy of your paystub to KIHA each time you receive a paycheck. KIHA will review the Life Builders rental policies with you when you enter the program. **Rent is calculated from the first day of employment or the first day you're living at Life Builders if you are employed when you enter.** Rent is 30% of your monthly adjusted gross income, and **is paid in two installments, one on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and the second on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month** . If rent is **paid late (after 5 days from the due date)**, there is a **\$10.00** late fee assessed. **The maximum ceiling rent for Life Builders is \$500.**

### Life Builders Savings:

You are expected to maintain a Savings Account while you are a resident. This is to support you in establishing a substantial savings account and in developing effective saving habits. You and your **Self Sufficiency Coordinator** will develop a Savings **Plan** within your **first three weeks** at Life Builders. You are expected to save a minimum of 20% of your income at Life Builders. Your SSC will assist you in setting up a Savings Account at **a local bank**. The majority (**55%**) of your Permanent Fund Dividend (if you receive one) must be saved, in accordance with your independent living goals. Any individual needs you have may be discussed with your **SSC**.

### Weekly House Meeting:

You are **required** to attend the weekly House Meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for residents to discuss concerns and make suggestions regarding issues affecting the Life Builders community. Here, you will also be updated on information and activities. You may only be excused from House Meeting if you are working **or in class**. If you are unable to attend the House Meeting, it is your responsibility to inform your **SSC** in advance.

### Chores:

As residents of a community, you are expected to share responsibilities in keeping the household clean and comfortable. Therefore, chores are assigned on a bi-weekly, rotating schedule. Throughout your two weeks, you are responsible for maintaining your assigned area on a daily basis. Upon completion of your chore, please have staff check your area. Chores are to be completed by 7:00pm each night. It is important to schedule your time so that you are able to complete your household responsibilities. **Failure to comply and do your chores will result in consequences.**

### Sign In and Out

You are required to sign in and out when leaving or entering the building. The Sign in and out board is located near the entrance on each floor.

### Life Skills Workshops:

Throughout your stay at Life Builders, you are required to attend Life Skills Workshops. The purpose of these workshops is to teach you fundamentals of independent living. Attendance in these groups will be considered **to determine your readiness for graduation** from Life Builders. Some Life Skills topics include:

- Employment Skills
- Financial Management (filing income taxes, Permanent Fund Dividend, etc.)
- Nutrition and Health Education
- Housing – apartment hunting and Landlord/Tenant laws
- Cultural Awareness
- Healthy Relationships
- Communication Skills
- Sex Education
- Anger Management
- Decision Making Skills

Necessary Life Skills groups are determined by the resident and the self sufficiency coordinator. Participation is mandatory and you are excused from attending only if

you are working **or in class**. In this case, **you are required** to make up the Life Skills group individually with Life Builders' staff. Workshops are coordinated with the self sufficiency coordinator and excused absences are obtained through the self sufficiency coordinator.

### **Life Builders Community Living**

#### Accessing the Life Builders Home

You will be given a **keys** that gives you access to the rec room door and your bedroom. This is the entrance that residents should use to enter the home. The key will allow only you and your roommate access to your bedroom. Staff will have a master access key. If you lose your **keys** there is a **\$25 fee for replacement**. You are responsible for your **keys** and should not give **them** to anyone else. This will assure the safety of residents and staff.

#### Smoking:

Life Builders is a smoke-free building. Cigarette smoking and tobacco chewing are only allowed on the back deck. The door must remain closed while smoking and cigarette butts are to be placed in the containers provided. It is the responsibility of residents who smoke to keep the deck clean of cigarette butts. Chew should be discarded in container provided.

#### Guests:

You are allowed to have up to two guests visit at a time. Guests are welcome in the living room, dining/kitchen area, **game room** and on the deck. **Resident bedrooms are off limits to guests**. Guests should be requested at least one hour in advance, so that staff can ensure that the activity of the house does not become overwhelming. Guests may be denied if there is an unresolved conflict between a guest and another resident. Each guest will be required to sign a Guest Agreement and to show a picture I.D. to Life Builders staff. All guests must be at least sixteen years old. You are responsible for your guests' behavior and must remain with them throughout the visit.

### Visiting hours:

Guests are welcome at Life Builders during the following hours:

Sunday – Thursday	10am - 8pm
Friday & Saturday	10am – 11pm

### Phones/ Messages:

There are two phones available for residents' use. Any messages taken should be written down clearly with the time and date, and placed in the resident mailbox located next to the staff offices. When answering the phone, you are asked to be respectful at all times. Long Distance calls must be made with a calling card or on your cell.

### Common Areas (kitchen, dining room, living room, great room, and rec room:

Residents are responsible for keeping these areas clean. Eating is allowed in the kitchen and dining room only. House furnishings belong to the program and you are asked to treat the home respectfully.

### Bedrooms:

Bedrooms are set up for two residents. You and your roommate are responsible for keeping your room clean. Please clean your room at least weekly, or more often as needed: empty trash, vacuum, pick up clothes, change your sheets, and dust. **Because of fire codes, you are not allowed to burn incense or candles in your bedroom.** For health reasons, food is not allowed in bedrooms. All visible materials (posters, etc.) are subject to approval by Life Builders staff. Your bedroom is your room and your roommate's room. Please do not allow visitors or other residents in your room. Because you are sharing a bedroom with another resident it is essential that each resident be respectful of the other's space, belongings and privacy. If problems arise between you and your roommate that you are unable to resolve on your own it is your responsibility to discuss the situation and determine a plan of resolution with staff. **Please be quiet in your room after 11 since other residents may need to get up early for work or class.**

### Bedroom Inspection:

Your room will be inspected on a regular basis. You will receive at least 24 hours notice of a room inspection; this allows you time to clean your room. We do room inspections for health and safety reasons. Room inspections are different from Room Searches.

### Room Searches:

Bedrooms and belongings are subject to random, complete searches by staff, in order to protect residents' safety. This will occur if Life Builders staff has reason to believe there is contraband in the home. There will be no advance notice given. We will make every effort to have you present during a room search. However, circumstances may require that we proceed without you.

### Medication:

You are responsible for taking, storing, and refilling any prescribed medications. You will be asked to inform your **SSC** of any medications you are taking so it can be noted in your file. In case of an emergency, this information will be passed on to medical personnel.

### Wake-Up:

You are responsible for waking yourself up to get to work, appointments, etc. on time. Life Builders staff does not wake up residents. You will be provided with an alarm clock upon entry into Life Builders. **Unless it is your" weekend", all residents are expected to be up, dressed and ready to work when the SSC arrives at 9:30.**

### Quiet Hours:

You are asked to respect your housemates at all times. Quiet hours are in effect daily from **11pm-10am** weekdays and **12pm -10am** weekends. During these hours, you are asked not to play loud music, **video games** or have loud conversations in your bedroom or hallways. This insures that you and your housemates will have the opportunity to sleep peacefully.

## **Consequences**

Staff and residents will discuss problems and potential consequences prior to consequences being implemented. Consequences may be imposed without discussion in the event of immediate safety concerns.

### Suspension:

A resident suspended from Life Builders will be required to sleep elsewhere. Residents on suspension may enter the home for appointments only. He/she must take all clothes and items necessary (including any medications) for the duration of the

suspension. Types of behavior meriting a suspension from Life Builders may include (but are not limited to):

- Failing to comply with program expectations
- Prolonged period of unemployment or underemployment
- Threatening
- Unauthorized entry/exit to Life Builders home

There is no rent reimbursement due to a suspension.

#### Discharge:

A resident who demonstrates a chronic pattern of noncompliance with the program structure, or who commits dangerous acts, may be discharged from Life Builders.

Types of behavior meriting discharge include (but are not limited to):

- Possession of drugs or paraphernalia
- Possession of a weapon
- Fighting and/or physically attacking another resident, guest or Life Builders staff member
- Chronic, on-going failure to follow **SS** Plan
- Tampering with security

A discussion between Life Builders staff and the resident involved will always precede any suspension or discharge. There is no rent reimbursement due to a discharge.

#### Vacations/Expenses

Life Builders is an opportunity for you to gain stability, in terms of your employment, your finances, and your independent living skills. A primary goal of Life Builders is that, upon graduation, you will be able to fully support yourself. This includes more than meeting your basic needs; after Life Builders, you will be hopefully able to afford some of your non-essential wants (car, vacations, etc.). With this future-oriented goal, Life Builders does not support residents in pursuing non-essential expenses. Residents are not allowed to take vacations while in the program, without approval of the Services Coordinator.

#### Volunteering

At Life Builders, we believe that part of being a healthy, responsible adult is contributing to the community. During your stay, Life Builders will provide a wide range of opportunities for you to volunteer in the community. You are encouraged to take part in these activities to meet new people and gain a sense of personal fulfillment.

## Life Builders Car Policy

Automobiles are a very important part of independent living; however, cars can be expensive in many ways. Because we feel a vehicle will be too great of a financial burden for a resident while in the program, residents will only be allowed to have a vehicle while in the Life Builders program with the permission of the Service Coordinator. **In order for a resident to ride in another resident's car, he must sign a waiver of liability form.**

## Guidelines for Successful Graduation from Life Builders

These guidelines are outlined to assist Life Builders residents and staff in setting achievable, realistic goals and to provide a measure for progress toward their attainment. The successful Life Builders Graduate will have:

- Demonstrated a successful employment record (i.e. stayed on the job at least six months) and improved employment situation (i.e. pay raise, increase in responsibilities, part-time to full-time, benefits etc.).
- Maintained checking/**debit** and savings accounts for at least four to six months with minimum supervision by Life Builders staff.
- Saved at least \$1,500.
- Obtained a High School Diploma or a GED.
- Participated in at least twelve **Life Builders Workshops**.
- If enrolled in college, completed at least two semesters and made financial arrangements to continue schooling.
- A valid proof of residence (i.e. a signed lease or receipt of deposit).
- Established an Aftercare plan with assistance from Life Builders staff.
- Demonstrated control of past behaviors such as emotional or substance abuse problems, if applicable, through counseling, AA, or related methods.

## Moving Out of Life Builders

You are asked to give at least thirty days notice of your intent to leave Life Builders. This also gives you, as a resident, time to plan your move, find a reasonable apartment, obtain household items you will need, and develop an appropriate after care plan.

Residents who do not give thirty days notice may not be refunded any rent for the month they leave. Exceptions may be granted with the approval **of the Self Sufficiency Coordinator and** the Services Coordinator.

Upon leaving Life Builders, you are expected to pack your belongings, **launder your bedding and towels, return any items given to you by the program** and thoroughly clean your room. **You must do a check out with staff.** Your room must be inspected and approved by staff before you leave. Also, please turn in your **keys** and leave information as to how you may be contacted.

If you are considering leaving Life Builders for any extended period of time (more than two days), it is necessary that you discuss this with your **SSC**. If you are absent from Life Builders for three days without any contact with your **SSC**, you will automatically be discharged from the program.

### **Congratulations and Welcome to Life Builders!**

This is a time to learn and practice independent living skills and acquire the resources necessary to live on your own.

Remember you are a role model. You will work hard to **earn and keep** your position in Life Builders. You deserve the privileges and responsibilities; however, please take care to monitor yourself and take responsibility for your actions.

The Resident Handbook has been reviewed with me by a Life Builders staff member. I understand that I am responsible for following the program structure and guidelines. I understand that staff will notify me of all program policy changes as they occur.

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Resident Signature

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Date

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Staff Signature

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Date

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Services Coordinator

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Date

## Admission and Occupancy Policy

Life Builders Young Adult Transitional Housing Program accepts young adults, between the ages of 18 and 24, who indicate a strong desire to become self sufficient, complete secondary education, engage in post secondary education/training, gain and retain employment, increase their independent living skills and show a willingness to comply with the expectations of the program. Admission to the program shows preference for Alaska Native/ American Indian young adults, low income young adults and those making a transition from village to town for schooling, training or work.

Life Builders follows the procedures outlined in the Handbook to operate the program on a daily basis. This includes rights and responsibilities of tenants and KIHA, rental procedures and rent, behavioral guidelines, employment guidelines, expectations for completion of the program and staffing positions.

