



# SAFE HOUSE

P R O J E C T

SAFE HOUSE CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

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# Safe House Certification Overview

Safe House Project's survivor leaders have compiled the best practices in evaluating aftercare programs for trafficking survivors from partners, survivor leaders, and industry experts from all over the country.

The industry-endorsed standards and guidelines aim to validate and improve your management, governance, and operations. Safe House Certification is a pathway to improved operations and enhanced effectiveness of your residential aftercare program. Over time these best practices will turn into normal practice for your organization.

## Eligibility for Certification

Safe house organizations eligible for certification are non-profit organizations who operate full-time emergency, long-term, and/or transitional residential programs serving international, undocumented, and domestic survivors of trafficking in the United States. Organizations must be a registered 501c3 in good standing with the IRS and be able to provide documentation of all required licenses in their state. The organization has programming specific to trafficking survivors.

## Safe House Certification Guidelines

### 1. Organizational Structure & Compliance

The organization complies with all statues and regulations as mandated by the state or federal government to effectively serve its residents. The organization actively develops quality relationships with partners and seeks community opportunities to benefit its residents.

1.1	The organization has complete, up-to-date policies and procedures that guide its operations.
1.2	The organization enforces its written policies and procedures to preserve its mission and deliver high quality residential programs to survivors of trafficking. The organization clearly documents employee and volunteer expectations, punishable infractions, consequences.
1.3	The organization communicates to the governing body, staff, or volunteers policies or requirements affecting their roles and responsibilities.
1.4	The demographics of your staff reflect where you live and the survivors who you serve

	in your residential programs.
1.5	Programs administered by the organization comply with its policies and requirements as determined by regulators and funders.
1.6	Residential programs meet all applicable state, federal and local codes and standards.
1.7	The organization gains efficiencies by coordinating with other nonprofits, law enforcement, healthcare professionals, etc. The organization creates and maintains relationships with organizations and agencies in the program's community like hospitals, non-government organizations, and government agencies to ensure collaboration and high-quality care for the survivors including referrals.
1.8	Volunteers are a valued part of your organization structure, but there are clear policies and procedures for vetting, training, and supporting volunteers.
1.9	Safety measures are in place to keep residents, staff, and volunteers safe and accountable.
1.10	Staff and volunteers are appropriately trained.
1.11	The program has survivor input throughout the development of their program. This can include survivors as board members, mentors, consultants, and staff.
1.12	The organization collects feedback, analyzes data, and improves based on findings to further its mission and goals.
1.13	The staffing of a restorative care home should reflect the program's desire to provide holistic therapeutic care to the survivor in a safe, effective, and trauma informed environment. Staff is vetted, trained, and supported to facilitate the desired outcome
1.14	Employees sign documents reflecting their understanding of their role and responsibility, safety protocols, and other policies and procedures.

## 2. Residential Program & Services

The organization provides access to residential housing and trauma-informed programming, which improves the quality of life for residents. The rights of residents are respected throughout the organization.

2.1	The organization integrates diversity and inclusion practices that match the demographics of the survivors they serve.
2.2	The organization recognizes the need to support survivors from all backgrounds, and not exclude residents based on race, religion, socioeconomic class, etc. based on the parameters of those who the organization is equipped to serve.
2.3	The organization proactively addresses threats to resident well-being and has disciplinary guidelines to protect everyone in the organization.
2.4	Residential program services are well defined and transparent. The organization clearly states which services they can provide and to whom they are able to provide those services.
2.5	Residents sign all necessary documentation to show their understanding of their care, program confidentiality, and any other relevant aspects of their treatment.
2.6	The organization has a formalized intake process in which the resident and the program can ensure placement is compatible prior to arrival.
2.7	The average length of the program appropriately reflects the stage where residents are in the continuum of restorative care.
2.8	The organization has a curriculum that is utilized to assist residents in future success and prevent recidivism.
2.9	The organization utilizes proper medical, therapeutic care, and curriculum based on its place in the continuum of restorative care. This includes medical treatment for all residents, including mental health.
2.10	The organization shows a commitment to the physical safety of survivors, including safety from external threats as well as internal threats from residents, staff, and

	volunteers. Programs should have clear policies and procedures for every emergency, including natural disasters, intruders, compromised location, and resident runaways.
2.11	The organization facilitates healthy family involvement when possible.
2.12	Residential programs for minors provide schooling options for residents that are safe, structured, and carry the minimum risk of re-traumatization.
2.13	The organization has clear boundaries for telephone and internet rules according to the program's place in the continuum of care.
2.14	The organization has clear policies on mediation between residents or residents and staff, conflict resolution, bullying, and boundaries.
2.15	The organization offers residents leaving their program, by graduation or early exit, resources necessary to meet their basic needs and prevent re-exploitation.

### 3. Governance & Executive Leadership

The Board of Directors is responsible for adopting and revising policies and the budget, and for providing organizational oversight with the advice of appropriate legal counsel. Board Members represent diverse professional and personal backgrounds enabling them to obtain resources to benefit the organization's mission. The executive leadership implements the mission, goals and policies of the organization and is responsible for meeting accreditation standards.

3.1	Board members are appointed in full compliance with its organizational documents.
3.2	The Board of Directors conducts its business in full conformance with state and federal legislation, its bylaws, and ethical standards.
3.3	The Board of Directors understands and supports the mission of the organization
3.4	The Board of Directors identifies and develops resources to serve the organization's mission and strategic goals.
3.5	The Board of Directors is involved in the development of plans to address organizational needs, long-term viability, and strategic risk taking.

3.6	The Board of Directors ensures that executive leadership is managing the organization's financials within approved budgets.
3.7	The Board of Directors evaluates, understands, and seeks to address survivor needs.
3.8	The Board of Directors assures that policies and procedures are effective and followed by executive leadership.
3.9	The Board of Directors supports the executive leadership to facilitate the success of the organization.
3.10	The Board of Directors ensures the organization has access to knowledgeable and qualified legal counsel.
3.11	The Executive Director, CEO, or equivalent liaises with the Board of Directors and communicates frequently with them.
3.12	The executive leadership executes their duties professionally, ethically, and with integrity.
3.13	The executive leadership encourages innovation, engagement, and continuous improvement.
3.14	The organization encourages and provides opportunities for professional development of employees.
3.15	The Executive Director, CEO, or equivalent is responsible for assuring that the organization meets certification standards.

#### **4. Financial Management**

The organization manages its resources and effectively deploys its assets to fulfill its mission of providing residential housing and services to survivors of trafficking.

4.1	The organization has sufficient funds to operate and has appropriate reserves to maintain operations for an additional 3-6 months.
4.2	The organization shows fiscal responsibility through approved policies and budgets to further the organization's mission, goals, and objectives.

4.3	The organization operates within its budget, maximizes its resources, evaluates and maintains appropriate percentages of expenses against the total budget.
4.4	The organization has approved audited financials or a 990 that complies with statutory and regulatory requirements.
4.5	The organization regularly evaluates its financial health and delivers complete and accurate reports to board members and donors.
4.6	The organization's financial health and management practices are transparent to the governing body, the IRS, donors, and other interested stakeholders.
4.7	The organization relies on various revenue streams to hedge against unforeseen events that may impact funding.
4.8	The organization demonstrates strong fiduciary responsibility and sustainability planning.
4.9	The organization must have an operating budget that reflects how all revenue and expenses will be generated each year, which includes salaries, benefits, supplies, basic needs, rental or mortgage costs, utilities, repair costs, programmatic costs, etc.
4.10	Organizations should show year over year growth in revenue, program expenses and reserves.
4.11	Organization shows strategic vision, goal planning and philanthropic giving plans that reflect its commitment to growth or sustainability.

## 5. Specialized Services (if applicable)

The organization clearly outlines policies and procedures for acquiring treatment, implementing proper accommodations, and otherwise implementing best practices for survivors with specialized needs.

5.1	The organization possesses the specialized services needed to accommodate the special needs they claim to be able to serve.
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5.2	The organization has a clear and swift timeline in which they can procure these services.
5.3	The organization validates the special needs of the survivor through the appropriate channels.
5.4	The staff of the organization are appropriately trained on the specificities of providing care to a survivor with those needs.
5.5	Programs who serve pregnant survivors have resources to provide proper prenatal medical care and post-birth planning, such as access to adoption resources.
5.6	Programs who serve pregnant survivors ensure residents can keep their newborn with them post-birth if they choose.
5.7	Programs serving survivors with hearing impairment who require an interpreter must provide access to the interpreter or another mutually agreed upon form of communication at all times.
5.8	Programs serving visually impaired residents must provide resources in large print or braille to ensure residents have access to the same program information and curriculum as other residents.
5.9	Residents with special needs that impair their reading ability, including reading comprehension, are provided alternatives to the resident handbook, curriculum materials, etc., in which the information is conveyed appropriately for their specific need.
5.10	Programs that allow or provide service animals, ensure the reputability of the animal's training require the animal be properly vaccinated.
5.11	Programs that allow or provide service animals provide reasonable accommodation for care of the animal, including access to veterinary care.
5.12	Programs that serve transgender survivors do so in homes that serve the individual's gender identity.