

Enrichment Services Volunteer Guide

Introduction Thanks for agreeing to be a Enrichment Services Volunteer. We hope you'll find the experience rewarding. We know you'll be a great help to our clients.

Contents

Topic	See Page
About Enrichment Services and your role	2
Our Clients	5
COTS Programs	6
Listening to Empower	7
Phone Numbers	8

About Enrichment Services

The program Clients enroll in **Enrichment Services** at COTS because they want to improve their chances of finding and keeping housing.

Each client faces different challenges. For some, it's a question of getting a job or a better-paying job. Others want to improve their credit or their money-management skills. Some may need to address issues with the courts, and some clients may be unfamiliar with using computers and phones to conduct business.

Enrichment Services offers a wide array of curricula and one-on-one assistance. We rely on volunteers to help individual clients adopt and implement useful strategies to find and keep housing and/or employment..

Volunteer Roles during Shelter in Place

We are looking for volunteers to take on the following roles:

- **Employment Coach:** help clients complete resumés and practice their interview skills.
 - **Housing Coach:** help clients complete rental applications and rental resumes; help clients practice speaking to landlords; help clients look for housing online.
 - **Tech Tutor:** help clients gain the skills and confidence they need to apply for housing and work online.
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Goals

- You will be helping COTS' clients systematically address the obstacles they encounter when they try to take the steps necessary to move on to permanent housing. Your support, encouragement and dedication will help students persevere.
 - You will also be showing students by your example that they are valuable. Too often, homeless people deal mainly with case workers, social workers, employment counselors, etc. To have someone from the community exhibit devotion and concern is a powerful morale booster.
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Results

The results of your efforts will sometimes be very obvious—a student may find a rental thanks to your help, or resolve a financial issue. At other times, the results will be subtle, but every bit as important. It's hard to measure changes in hopefulness, self-esteem or connection in just a few weeks. But these changes do occur among our clients, and they enable them to tackle their toughest tasks. Volunteers, by their devotion, play a crucial role in these changes.

Support for your role

Enrichment Services Manager Eileen Morris will provide training, templates and support. Her colleague Patrick Lalonde Berg is also available for help and support.

If you have any questions or concerns about how your relationship with your client is going, please call Eileen Morris at 765-6530 x 128 or 707-776-7638.

Confidentiality

We expect that you will be especially sensitive about issues of confidentiality. Students have signed releases of information, allowing you to share information with COTS staff about any concerns you may have.

Clients will likely share lots of information with you, but COTS does not have the right to share clients' private information with you.

You may receive questions from family and friends about your volunteer work. Please speak only in generalities.

If you wish to mask your phone number, you may wish to enroll with Google Voice .

Inform COTS if you have concerns

If you are concerned for a client in any way, please discuss your concerns with Eileen or Patrick.

Gifts

You should never make a loan or a monetary gift of any kind to any clients you work with.

If you want to present your student with a small gift at the end of your relationship, feel free, but there are no expectations that you do so.

Our clients

The only generalities we can make about the COTS' clients enrolled in **Enrichment Services** is that they have all experienced homelessness, and they are all low-income. For most, homelessness is a temporary situation. For others, it's been a long ordeal.

In most cases, our students' challenges aren't exclusively economic. They may be recovering from addictions or living with them. They may struggle with their mental, physical or emotional health. They may at one time have been victims of abuse. Our clients can get help with any of the above problems by working with their COTS' case managers or by using the referrals they obtain from their case managers.

Case managers refer students to **Enrichment Services** only if they feel that they are up to the challenge.

If you have concerns about any of the students you are working with, please let Eileen or Patrick know.

COTS programs

- Emergency Shelter** We offer Emergency Shelter for families with children and for single adults. Singles live at our Mary Isaak Center (named for one of our co-founders). Families with Children live at our Kids First Family Shelter.
- Permanent Housing** Our **Rapid Re-Housing** program is the most successful in the county, offering case management and time-limited financial assistance to new renters.

We offer **Permanent Supportive Housing** at a variety of locations throughout the county,
- Homeless Prevention** We provide financial assistance and case management to struggling tenants in Petaluma.
- Recuperative Care** We provide a quiet and serene place to heal to homeless individuals who have been released recently from the hospital.
- Food** We provide free daily meals to anyone in the community who is struggling to make ends meet.
- Outreach** Our outreach specialist meets with unsheltered people at campgrounds, the library, hospitals and street corners. The outreach worker develops relationships with their clients, with an end goal of encouraging them to accept shelter or permanent housing.

Listening to Empower

“Listening to Empower” is a listening technique that allows a skilled listener to structure a conversation in a way that helps someone facing a problem or challenge arrive at decisions and make choices.

The structured conversation includes three steps.

Explore

- The speaker describes his or her challenge or problem
- The listener uses active listening skills and reflects back to the speaker what it is that the speaker has said.
- The listener asks questions only to draw more information from the speaker from the speaker’s perspective. This helps the speaker go deeper into his own thoughts

Transition

- The listener states the problem, for example: “You aren’t making enough money to pay all the bills you’ll have when you go to look for independent housing.”
- The listener states the goal (which comes from the speaker), for example: “You want to make enough money to be able to afford in a rental of your own.”
- The listener asks what the speaker has done or considered doing to address the problem.
- The listener uses active listening skills to reflect all responses in order to demonstrate understanding

Resolve

- The listener asks if the speaker wants ideas
 - The listener offers one idea
 - The listener checks for reaction
 - The listener reflects that reaction
 - If the speaker wants another idea, the listener provides it and repeats the above steps.
 - Once the speaker decides on a course of action, the listener summarizes the next steps necessary to do it.
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Contact Information

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COTS
Eileen Morris

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berg@cots.org

COTS
Patrick Lalonde-Berg

Your students:

Other numbers:

I have read and understood the above information.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____