



822 WOODLAND STREET  
NASHVILLE, TN 37206  
(615) 262-3003

DATE: June 12, 2009

TO: Our favorite service providers!

FROM: Brian Huskey, Interim Director, The Academy

RE: The Academy General Information and  
UPDATED Application Process

I am writing to advise you of recent changes at The Academy in Nashville, TN.

I have recently assumed the role of Interim Director for the program, replacing Mr. Frederick Hilliard. The change in program leadership is also bringing about a few program changes, not the least of which is the application and admission process for entrance to the Academy. This communication is intended to provide you some refresher (or perhaps altogether new) information about our program.

The Academy provides a highly structured residential recovery program for individuals with a history of chronic homelessness and addictive disorders. It is based on the highly successful Delancey Street Foundation program in San Francisco. **The program is a work-and education- centered rehabilitative behavior modification model that requires a two-year commitment from the applicant.** We are not a licensed treatment center, but our program model and methodology closely resembles that of a therapeutic community. Individuals with addiction, chronic homelessness, and incarceration histories are eligible for our services. **A variety of factors are considered when an individual applies to The Academy, the most critical of which is a sincere and clearly articulated desire to change one's life.**

The Academy runs several businesses that generate the program's operational revenue. **ALL RESIDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO WORK** in one or more of these enterprises and will rotate through each of them during the two years they spend at The Academy. Applicants should be aware that work assignments are routinely subject to widely and frequently changing schedules and include evenings and weekends. Our current enterprises include a moving company, landscaping (commercial and residential), and a residential and commercial cleaning crew. There

are also opportunities for residents to be involved in the clerical aspects of each of these businesses and learn highly valuable administrative skills.

There are also specific learning objectives for each of these assignments. An individual's progress through various phases of the program is contingent upon mastery of specific objectives.

Applicants must also be physically and mentally able to fulfill the work obligations, all of which are demanding, and to function appropriately within the structure, schedule, and expectations of The Academy's residential community. The Academy's extensive application process is intentional – individuals with ongoing medical concerns that potentially limit their ability to work are not appropriate placements for The Academy. **It is therefore imperative that The Academy be fully aware of any applicant's medical concerns, physical or mental, at the time of application.**

Further, The Academy's rigorous residential structure demands that each resident fulfill specific responsibilities essential to the ongoing operation of the house, including cleaning, cooking and other domestic or administrative assignments. Senior residents of The Academy routinely supervise these tasks. Applicants should note that failure to follow directions are grounds for disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Residents of The Academy who do not have a high school diploma or GED are required to obtain one while at The Academy. We provide resources needed for residents to complete their secondary education. Obtaining a GED is a requirement for graduation from The Academy.

Facility and agency contacts should be aware that a key factor in admissions decisions to The Academy is an individual's level of motivation, indicated by timely completion of the application materials, following the directions for the process, and following through with the interview at the appointed time. Additionally, the completeness of one's application, the coherence of the accompanying letter, and the individual's compliance provide The Academy with specific information regarding an applicant's cognitive capacity. While we acknowledge that cognitive and educational deficiencies are common to the population served by The Academy, individuals determined by qualified professionals to have existing, ongoing gross cognitive dysfunction that limits their capacity to work, learn, and live in community are not appropriate for The Academy. Further, complete, honest disclosure of all information requested in the application or interview is expected.

Those of you who are affiliated with the corrections system MUST notify us regarding an applicant who has ever been confirmed as part of a Security Threat Group (STG). Applicants will be asked about past and present gang affiliations during their interview.

Our population is diverse and includes residents with significant histories of incarceration, homelessness, and addiction. Applicants should be fully aware that The Academy does not provide any clinical support in-house, so all medical care – physical or mental – are outsourced to qualified providers working within the indigent

health care system in Davidson County, Tennessee. While we do not necessarily exclude applicants with ongoing severe and persistent DSM-IV mental health disorders, applicants should be aware that The Academy cannot and will not provide individual or group counseling, medication management, or other therapeutic services.

**There are only two criminal histories that are exclusionary for residence at The Academy: arson or sex offenses.**

The Academy does not presently serve women, but we expect to have a women's program in place later in 2009.

## **THE ACADEMY – UPDATED APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applicants typically self-refer to The Academy, but your role within the corrections or social services system greatly helps us effectively identify good potential applicants some of your population / clients that will most likely have "goodness of fit" here at The Academy. Therefore, your "referrals" will be helpful to an applicant seeking to make a change.

For those of you working in social services agencies that work with the homeless, our primary target population is men who meet the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of "chronically homeless." Incarcerated individuals applying to The Academy will also be expected to provide information about their history of homelessness prior to incarceration.

The first step is to call or write to request an application form. This form must be completed, signed, and returned to The Academy staff, along with a 2 or 3 page letter about one's personal life, drug usage history, criminal activity and personal behaviors related to the individual's drug use. These materials must fully disclose the applicant's personal circumstances. **False information or significant omissions that are discovered in the application process or while in residence at The Academy are grounds for dismissal from the program. Therefore, honest disclosure is a requisite characteristic for successful admission and residence at The Academy.**

After an individual's application has been completed and returned, the staff at The Academy review and determine if the applicant is eligible for a personal or telephone interview, both of which are conducted in the same format. The Academy staff will notify the applicant's facility contact listed on the application form to schedule an interview at a specific time. It is then the individual's responsibility to contact The Academy on the specified date and at the appointed time – NO EXCEPTIONS. The Academy staff may at any time reserve the right to discuss an applicant's medical, mental health, incarceration or other personal history with any provider(s). Appropriate release forms are provided with the application and must be signed and returned with the original application.

Telephone interviews are conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Personal interviews are conducted

at fixed times, to be scheduled with the applicant. We can conduct personal interviews with individuals incarcerated in Davidson County at the site where they are incarcerated.

Admissions decisions are made only after all forms have been completed and an interview conducted. Applicants will be notified in writing regarding their admission status within 5 – 7 days after the interview.

For those individuals coming from the corrections system, please be aware that there are SPECIAL CONDITIONS related to your parole / probation documents that MUST BE STATED ON THE RELEASE PAPERS. These special conditions are:

- The individual must GRADUATE from The Academy, which takes two years.
- Living Condition Specified (THE PAROLE CERTIFICATE MUST STATE EXPLICITLY “RELEASE TO THE ACADEMY FOR A MINIMUM OF TWO (2) YEARS”).
- If a parole certificate states “or other approved program for a minimum of ninety (90) days, admission to The Academy will be denied.

Further, The Academy must receive a FAX copy of an applicant’s release papers PRIOR TO release in order to ensure their accuracy. Please FAX communications to (615) 262-3003. Under no circumstances will an individual be admitted until all necessary documentation has been received by The Academy – NO EXCEPTIONS.

All applicants should be aware that The Academy’s admission process takes time. Each application is scrutinized at several levels and can thus take several weeks to complete.

While individuals initially commit to The Academy for a two-year period, they are free to extend their stay to three or more years. Since we are technically a permanent housing program, there is no limit on length of stay – although our goal is not to “institutionalize” people; rather we seek to equip them with valuable, quantifiable work skills, effective communications and interpersonal abilities, and the capacity to be productive citizens of the community.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I will be pleased to come and speak to your agency or facility representatives at any time. At some point in the next few weeks, we will hold an “open house” to which you will all be invited to learn more about The Academy.

I can be reached by telephone at (615) 262-3003 or by email at [brian@urbanhousingsolutions.org](mailto:brian@urbanhousingsolutions.org). I look forward to working with you. Thanks for all that YOU do to make Nashville a better place for all our citizens.