

# EMPOWER 225

— Equip · Inspire · Elevate —



## ---Anchor House---

Transitional Living Program  
Resident Handbook

Our mission is to empower youth in the capital region who are at-risk of homelessness and dependency to reach their highest potential through educational support, life-skills training, career preparedness, housing and mentorship

# Table of Contents

## Section I

- Mission Statement & Core Values
- Welcome Letter
- Program Description
  - Education
  - Life Skills
  - Employment
  - Transportation
  - Community Service & Outreach Activities
  - Social & Recreational Activities
  - Financial Guidance
  - Leadership Development

## Section II

- General Expectations
- Tier Progression & Privileges
  - Tier 1
  - Tier 2
  - Tier 3

### Section III

- House & Program Policies
  - Curfew
  - Chores & Cleanliness
  - Common Areas
  - Day / Overnight Passes
  - Guest
  - Medicine & Medical Procedure
  - Moving In & Roommates
  - Resident Proposals
  - Substance Abuse
  - WIFI Electronic Devices & Social Media

### Section IV

- Helpful Family Hints
- Consequences & Color Codes

# EMPOWER 225

**Equip** to succeed. **Inspire** to Dream. **Elevate** to Potential.

## Our Mission

*To empower youth in the capital region to reach their highest potential through educational support, life-skills training, career preparedness, housing and mentorship.*

## Core Values

1. **Jesus First** (Matt 6:33)

*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

2. **Servanthood** (Mark 9:35)

*Jesus called the twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.*

3. **Others** (Phil 2:3)

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourself.*

4. **Family** (1 Pet 2:17)

*Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers.*

5. **Teamwork** (Eph 4:16)

*From Him the whole body, joined and held-together by enough supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

6. **Accountability** (Rom 14:12)

*So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.*

7. **Fun** (Ecc 3:13)

*That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil - this is a gift from God.*



Welcome,

The Empower 225 team would like to welcome you to your new home. We are excited to be a part of your family. To help you in your transition we have created this handbook as a guide to assist you in what's to come. Please note that Empower 225 has the right to change a policy at any time in accordance with state regulations and Healing Place Church. This resident handbook will be updated as needed.

At the Anchor House our goal is to provide a safe place for you to develop the skills necessary to become independent. Our vision is to help you reach your highest potential through educational support, life-skills training, career preparedness, housing and mentorship. We are dedicated to providing you with a healthy family-like environment where you can live and learn as you transition into adulthood and independence. If you have any questions or concerns, we are always here to help. Don't hesitate to talk to any of us at any time.

We believe in every youth who is a part of the Empower 225 family! We believe that God has brought you here for a more specific purpose. He has great plans for you! Our prayer is that you will discover your gifts and talents as we walk with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,

**Anchor House**

# Program Description

Empower 225's Anchor House is a faith-based state licensed Transitional Living Program (TLP) designed to serve single males between the ages of 16 – 21. Our staff is committed to helping you develop skills and providing you with resources that promote independence. Our goal for you is to transition into independence during your 18 months at the Anchor House. However, in some cases that time can be shortened or extended depending on your progress. You will move between program levels as you accomplish educational, financial, and career goals.

**Education** is fundamental to your success. As a resident at the Anchor House you will be expected to participate in all educational activities necessary until you have received a high school diploma or its equivalent. The staff will assist you in getting enrolled into a local school that best suits you. After receiving your diploma, it's strongly recommended that you pursue higher education or job specific training.

**Life Skills** are a key component in helping you achieve independence. We cover a wide variety of Life Skill trainings and "Hot Topic" group discussions. Your participation in Life Skills is mandatory, it's our pleasure to work alongside you as you learn how to cook, clean and maintain your living quarters. Chores are a regular practice here at the Anchor House and you are expected to complete them when assigned.

**Employment** opportunities are available with our local community partners. You will become more aware of these during our 225 Employment Program. During the 8-week course you will learn job readiness skills such as: communication, goal setting, accountability, teamwork, people skills, business etiquette, and mock interviews. It is your responsibility to pursue employment while at the Anchor House.

**Transportation** to and from work, interviews, school, medical appointments, and emergencies will be provided. Additional transportation will be provided at the discretion of staff. You are encouraged to purchase your own vehicle as long as it is operated within state laws and Empower 225 policies and procedures.

**Community Service & Outreach** activities are available weekly throughout Baton Rouge. We partner with local non-profits, schools, and Healing Place Church to provide support for those in need. During your stay at the Anchor House, you are expected to participate in any activity we are invited to or host. Your role in these activities will be assigned to you in the area you feel most comfortable.

**Social & Recreational** activities are key in developing skills that promote healthy living. We have a variety of activities to participate in. Playing sports, exercise, small groups, eating out, formal and informal gatherings will occur often. You will be expected to participate in these activities if you are able. Empower 225 promotes social activities within our organization. You will become more familiar with these activities throughout your stay.

**Financial Guidance** will be given to you as you progress through the program. You will be expected to establish a bank account. Saving your money is necessary as you transition into independence. If at any time you display irresponsible behavior managing your money the Anchor House staff has the right to hold your debit card to assist you in saving your hard-earned dollars.

**Leadership Development** occurs at your own pace. Empower 225 offers a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) and a leadership academy (ELA). Opportunities to lead small group discussions, public speaking, and peer driven leadership roles are available for you as you feel ready. You are not required to become a leader. However, developing skills that promote self-sufficiency is mandatory.

**BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER**

**IN BROTHERLY LOVE**

ROMANS 12:10



# General Expectations

The Anchor House is a voluntary program. Each youth should review and agree to the resident rules and guidelines. Violating or refusing to follow the rules and guidelines set forth in this handbook may lead to the loss of privileges, disciplinary action, or discharge from the program. The Anchor House staff reserves the right to address each violation on an individual basis depending on the need of the youth and the severity of the infraction.

You are expected to always communicate your whereabouts, work schedules, and medical appointments with the staff. Do not assume the staff is aware of your transportation or personal needs. The staff will only know if you communicate it.

You are expected to act responsibly. The Anchor house is not a boy's home or a group home. It's a program that helps young men become adults. With that in mind you will be expected to carry yourself in a way that shows respect and honor to others. Being disrespectful to staff, volunteers or other youth will not be tolerated.

You are expected to participate in all Empower 225 activities that you have been asked to attend.

To assist you in your effort to become independent the Anchor House will provide utilities (water, sewer, electricity, Wi-Fi). We will also provide you with miscellaneous items like (groceries, linens, hygiene items, work and interview clothes, haircuts, etc.). Other resources are provided to you on a case by case basis.

# Tier Progressions & Tier Privileges

In order to move from one level to the next you will need to complete all of the tier specific requirements. Each tier has a list of goals that will help you in your pursuit of independence. You are expected to complete the goals you have created for yourself as well as accomplish the goals for each tier. There is no particular order in which they need to be completed. You will have the help of mentors, staff and volunteers to assist you. Privileges are earned as you participate and complete tier specific requirements. You are expected to participate in requested Empower 225 activities. Lack of participation in those activities may result in loss of privileges.

**CRITICISM IS EASY**  
**ACHEIVEMENT IS MORE DIFFICULT**  
WINSTON CHURCHILL

## Tier 1 Requirements, if applicable

- Complete entry assessments
- Develop Service Plan with case manager
- Participate in all assigned activities
- Complete 8-week employment program
- Enroll in education
- Find employment
- Find a mentor
- Obtain state issued ID, Social Security Card, Medicaid
- Open a bank account
- Complete 30 consecutive days without a pink slip
- Meet or be actively pursuing completion of all monthly goals
- Meet with staff at least once a week to discuss progress
- Establish a consistent routine

## Tier 1 Privileges

- Anchor House / Dream Center Wi-Fi access
- Transportation
- Weekly recreational activities
- Day passes with signed approval from staff. Must communicate with staff every 4 hours
- 1 overnight pass per month with signed approval from staff

## Tier 2 Requirements, if applicable

- Remain committed to tier 1 responsibilities
- Complete semi-annual assessments (Ansel Casey & IPFI)
- Obtain HiSET or High School Diploma
- Enroll in higher Education (optional)
- Display consistent level of maturity
- Obtain full or part time employment
- Maintain checking or savings account
- Maintain a supervised monthly budget
- Remain accountable to peers and staff
- Establish long term connections with peers & adults
- Develop exit strategy with staff

## Tier 2 Privileges

- All tier 1 privileges carry over
- Enroll in driver's education & obtain driver's license
- TV / Game system in room (purchased by youth)
- 3 Overnight Passes per month
- Day Passes with signed approval from staff (Must communicate with staff every 4 hours)

## Tier 3 Requirements, if applicable

- Remain committed to tier 1 & 2 responsibilities
- Secure gainful employment
- Secure a reliable vehicle with insurance
- Pursue housing
- Execute exit strategy with staff guidance
- Remain accountable to peers' staff and program expectations

## Tier 3 Privileges

- All tier 1 privileges carry over
- All tier 2 privileges carry over
- Day passes as needed
- Overnight passes as needed
- Flexibility awarded as needed for independent living
- Graduation

**NOW FINISH THE WORK, SO THAT YOUR EAGER WILLINGNESS TO DO IT MAY BE MATCHED BY YOUR COMPLETION OF IT...**

2 CORINTHIANS 8:11

# House & Program Policies

**Curfew:** The Anchor House curfew is set for 10:00pm Sunday through Thursday. On Friday and Saturday, it's set for 11:00pm. Curfew will not be extended. If you are working past curfew, exceptions can be made. Please note the staff may speak with your manager to confirm your work schedule and need to work past curfew. The Anchor House is not responsible for your transportation after curfew. You will need to secure an UBER or other source of transportation. You are encouraged to find employment that does not keep you out past 10:00pm. In most cases, employers will work with you to help achieve this. If you are staying out until curfew, we will need to verify that you arrived back to the house on time. Checking in with staff is required.

**Chores & Cleanliness:** The Anchor House staff will post a rotating chore schedule each month. It is your responsibility to monitor and follow through with your chore each week. Anchor House chores range from cutting the grass to cleaning specific areas of the home. Your chores are monitored by your peers and staff. Room checks will happen throughout your stay with us. During room checks we will evaluate the cleanliness of your room and bathroom. This includes; clean floor, no trash, no food or food containers. Your desktops must be wiped down, clothes washed, dried and put away. If you need help with any of these chores, you can ask your peers or staff for assistance.

**Common Areas:** Common areas of the Anchor House are anywhere within the home where group activities take place including the basketball court and outdoor patio. Common areas are to be shared with everyone and that includes the activities that take place there. Everyone including staff is responsible for keeping the common areas clean. Do not expect the staff or your peers to pick up your mess, it is your responsibility.

*The Anchor House is well known throughout the community and has frequent visits from local professionals, mentors, and volunteers. We are committed to excellence, one of the ways we show this is by keeping the Anchor House presentable at all times.*

**Day & Overnight Passes:** Any pass you desire to take must be approved by staff. The approval of Day & Overnight Passes is rewarded on a case by case basis. Your behavior and participation in the program can affect your ability to enjoy passes. During your first 30 days in the program you will not be allowed to take an overnight pass. Day Passes must be approved by the staff. Day and Night Passes will be granted in accordance with tier privileges. You can view tier privileges on pages 9 – 12 of this handbook. You will need to fill out a pass form and submit to staff for approval before you can leave. Please give the staff at least 2 days' notice before taking overnight passes.

**Guest:** Per state regulations guest are not allowed to enter the Anchor House without staff accountability. Under no circumstances will guest be allowed in the home unattended nor be allowed upstairs. Guest are not allowed to take you on a pass without proper clearance.

*The state requires clearance from the FBI and DCFS for any person entering the home or asking to take you anywhere unsupervised.*

You are allowed to visit with friends and family, and we encourage you to do so. If you are going to visit friends or family a Day Pass or Overnight Pass must be completed and approved by the staff. Please note that our guest policy is put in place for the safety of our youth and is in compliance with DCFS regulations. You are required to get approval from the staff before having visitors. All visitors must sign in on the visitor log located in the PFA, the staff will assist you with this.

**Medicine & Medical Procedures:** The Anchor House is not a medical facility. There are no trained medical professionals on staff. The Anchor House staff does not administer medication. We will hold your medication in a locked room. However it is your responsibility to take it and to notify staff when you need a prescription refill. The Anchor House does not cover the cost of medical expenses. You are encouraged to get Medicaid to help cover the cost of dental care, eye exams, Urgent Care Clinics, etc. If you do not have Medicaid, we can help you get it. As mentioned above we are not a medical facility. In some cases, we are not be able to provide care if you are experiencing mental health challenges. We work closely with behavioral health professionals to give you the care you need.



**Moving In & Roommate Policy:** Each room is designed to house 2 youth with limited space to store belongings. Therefore, we might not have room to store all of your personal items. If possible, only bring items that you will use on a regular basis. If you do not have anywhere to store your extra items, the Anchor House can keep them in the storage shed outside or in one of the closets upstairs. We are not responsible for any damage or theft of your belongings. Do not bring cash or valuables to the Anchor House as there are no locks on any of the youth bedroom doors. You will be sharing your room with another youth. You are expected to show respect to your roommate by keeping your side of the room clean and working together to achieve common goals. The staff will pair you up with who they feel would be a good fit. If for any reason problems arise between roommates, room changes can be made at the discretion of staff. Room searches will take place during your stay at the Anchor House and personal belongings will be searched when entering the home.

*If you bring any contraband into the home, it will be confiscated. Examples of contraband are drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, weapons, any type of profane material which includes pornography, inappropriate clothing, inappropriate music, etc.*

**Resident proposals:** We encourage our youth to have a voice. We want you to know that your input matters. What you say is heard and what you believe is respected. With that in mind, residents have the opportunity to make request for adjustments to policies and procedures. In order to request changes to a policy, you must write a formal proposal and present it to the staff. In the proposal you should address the current policy and present the new policy that would improve the old one. You must have all youth in agreement before presenting it to the staff. The staff must also be in full agreement before approving any policy changes. Any changes made to a policy must be in accordance with current DCFS licensing regulations. If you need help in writing or presenting the proposal the staff will be happy to assist you.

**Substance Abuse:** Mind altering chemicals are not allowed at the Anchor House. You will be subject to a drug screen upon entering the home and occasionally given drug screens during your stay with us. If you are not able to pass a drug screen you will be asked to take an assessment with a licensed substance abuse counselor to determine a proper course of action. You will be required to follow through with whatever plan the counselor puts in place. The Anchor House staff will help you with transportation to and from recovery groups. We are not a substance abuse treatment facility. If you are unable to get clean, then you will be discharged from the program.

**Vehicle Policy:** You are encouraged to get a vehicle before graduating the program. In order to do so you will need to have money leftover in your bank account after purchasing your car. You will also need to purchase car insurance and gas for transportation. Parking is limited at the Anchor House, please don't bring a vehicle to the home if it is not in working condition. We are responsible for your safety, please don't leave the house without signed approval and communicating your whereabouts with the staff. You are required to obey all traffic and safety laws, as well as follow program guidelines. Failure to do so may result in you being discharged from the program

**WIFI, Electronics & Social Media:** You are given access to the youth WIFI password upon entering the program. We are only allowed to have two devices per youth connected to the WIFI. The WIFI connection is turned off at 11:00pm during the week, and 12:00am on weekends. There will be no TV's or game systems in your room until you earn tier 2 privileges. If you are using your electronics in a common area of the home, you must respect others by sharing the television and game systems and using headphones to enjoy your entertainment. You are not allowed to post inappropriate material on social media. Your picture and story may be shared on multiple Empower 225 platforms. Therefore, during your stay with us, all post you make on social media must be respectful. Do not engage in controversial conversations on social media. Stay out of political, religious, gender, and racial arguments.

# EMPOWER 225

Equip · Inspire · Elevate

- The staff is in charge. Period
- You will respect everyone who lives here. Always
- Rules are rules, they are to be followed.
- Life is not always about you; sometimes it is about others.
- You are not expected to be perfect, therefore, you may not expect perfection from others, even staff.
- When grace is extended, don't take advantage.
- If you don't have something nice to say, don't say it.
- You are expected to respond or acknowledge when you are spoken to, ear buds or not.
- If you need to go somewhere, you need to give plenty of notice.
- Being honest is always your best option, lying won't get you anywhere.
- Be a man of your word.
- If your plans have changed, you need to tell the staff as soon as they change.
- This is your life, make something out of it.
- There are plenty of times to have a discussion, you may always speak your mind – as long as you do it in a respectful way.
- When someone is speaking, they have the floor.
- If you would like privileges, you will need to fulfill your responsibilities.
- If you want to borrow something, ask permission first.
- When you borrow something, return it as you found it and where you found it.
- There is no maid who lives here. If you make a mess, clean it up.
- When you take something out, put it back.
- If you take the last of something, communicate that to others.
- If you break something, you will be involved in the fixing or replacing process.
- Electronics are a privilege, not a right.

# Consequences & Color Codes

We are committed to positive youth development. Therefore, not following through with program expectations may result in consequences. Each youth and each situation are different. Do not ask the staff about the consequences of other youth. Consistent refusal to participate in the program may result in being disciplined or discharged from the Anchor House. We track your progress through a number of different methods. Participating in the program, accomplishing your goals, and following the rules will all factor into what consequences or privileges you have. We use a color system to determine your status.

**Green** All privileges reflective to tier privileges earned

**Gray** Minor loss of privileges (staff discretion)

**Yellow** Moderate loss of privileges (staff discretion)

**Red** Major loss of privileges / discharge for next violation (staff discretion)

*This is an amazing opportunity for you to gather some tools and resources for what's ahead in life, so make the most of it. Work hard, respect others, fight the good fight, stay focused, overcome adversity when it arises, and never give up! We are on your side, let us bring shape to your ideas and structure to your future.*