



# Family Promise Montco PA Housing Program Handbook

Last Updated 2-28-2024



*Welcome* to the Family Promise Montco PA Housing program. The purpose of this handbook is to help you become familiar with the policies and procedures of the Family Promise Housing program so that your time here is as productive as possible. We utilize a trauma-informed approach to our policies and practices. We value trauma-sensitive care and make it a priority for you and your family.

The program serves participants by helping them create a service plan, save money, and set goals to help achieve greater financial independence.

To accomplish this, you and the Family Promise staff have a responsibility to each other. Our objective is to work in partnership with you to provide quality services that support your effort toward self-sufficiency.

We recommend you keep this handbook for personal reference to help you be successful while participating in the program. It can be useful tool to answer questions you may have about our policies and program requirements.

By signing the "acknowledgement" page, you are agreeing that you have read and understand the program requirements. Contact the Case Manager at 215-606-3423 during business hours if you have any questions or concerns.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Executive Director: Marsha Eichelberger

Network Program Manager: Meaghan McBride

Case Manager: Tiffany Jones

Director of Program Services: Tiffany Jones

Finance Manager: Anne Whitney

Director of Technology and Administration Debbie Badger

OFFICE TELEPHONE: 215-628-2334

OFFICE HOURS: Monday – Friday  
9 AM to 5 PM

BUILDING MAINTENANCE EMERGENCY 267-405-3348  
(AFTER HOURS)

See page 6 for what constitutes a maintenance emergency.

**Maintenance Email:** [fpmontcomain@fpmontco.org](mailto:fpmontcomain@fpmontco.org) for regular maintenance issues.

POLICE: **911**

FIRE: **911**

AMBULANCE: **911**

TRASH COLLECTION:

**Hope Gardens:** Please put trash in the dumpster in the Hope Gardens Parking Lot. The dumpster is emptied twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There is a fee for large-item removal, even if it fits in the dumpster.

**Hope Forest:** Wednesday is the weekly collection day for trash and recycling.

**Hope on Fifth in Lansdale:** Thursday is the weekly collection day for trash and recycling.

**HOSPITALS:**

Suburban Community Hospital 610-278-2000  
2701 Dekalb Pike, Norristown, PA

Abington Hospital-Jefferson Health 215-481-2000  
1200 Old York Road, Abington PA

Chestnut Hill Hospital-Tower Health 215-248-8200  
8835 Germantown Ave. Philadelphia, PA

PECO: (800) 494-4000

PECO GAS OR ELECTRIC EMERGENCY: (800) 841-4141

LANSDALE ELECTRIC: (215) 368-1691

LANSDALE ELECTRIC EMERGENCY: (215) 368-1801

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **OFFICE HOURS**

The Family Promise office is typically open weekdays from 9AM until 5PM. In the event of an after-hours emergency please follow the procedure outlined below. The office is closed in observance of the following holidays.

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas

### **EMERGENCIES**

Emergencies are:

1. No heat in the winter
2. A plumbing leak or sewage stoppage that might damage personal belongings or apartment property
3. No electricity - after checking your circuit breaker
4. Any condition that could cause a fire
5. Smell of gas
6. Fire

### **FIRE ALARMS**

When the fire or smoke alarm sounds, assume there is a fire and vacate the building immediately. Families should gather across the street from the property. One adult from each family should take a headcount to make sure everyone within their family is out of the building. Do not re-enter the building until the Fire Department says it is safe to return. If you feel you are in need of extra support, contact a Family Promise staff member at 267-405-3348. Please leave a message with a return phone number.

### **AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY / MAINTENANCE ISSUES**

Call 267-405-3348 and explain the nature of the emergency or maintenance problem. A Family Promise staff member will assess the situation and respond accordingly. As a reminder, the emergency phone number is for emergencies only. Non-emergency situations should be handled the next business day.

## **SECTION 2: MOVE-IN**

Rent is due in full on the first day of each month.

Checks or money orders should be made to Family Promise Montco PA.

A late charge of \$20 will be assessed if the full rent payment is not received.

Family Promise will assess a \$15 fee for returned checks; the tenant is responsible for any additional fees associated with a returned check.

Tenants who become behind on rent will be considered out of compliance and are subject to eviction.

All adults are expected to be employed at least 25 hours per week.

### **SECURITY DEPOSIT**

A \$1000 security deposit is due at lease signing. Security deposits shall NOT be applied to last month's rent. The security deposit, or any portion thereof, will be refunded to tenant within thirty (30) days of exit, provided tenant fulfills the following conditions, but not limited to:

1. Written notice within thirty (30) days of your departure date.
2. No money owed for rent or loans to Family Promise Montco PA
3. Apartment is clean and free of debris, furniture, etc. at move out.
4. No damages to the apartment.
5. No haul-away costs have been incurred.
6. All keys returned.
7. Forwarding address given for security deposit return.

### **TENANT'S INSURANCE**

Tenants are required to obtain and maintain renter's insurance. Family Promise's insurance does not cover the tenant's personal belongings or liability. A copy of the insurance policy will be required at move-in and must be renewed annually.

### **LEASE**

The lease is a contract obligating both parties to the terms and conditions listed therein. Tenants will be provided a copy of the lease. The Case Manager will review the lease and any riders with tenants. Tenants are encouraged to ask questions about anything that is unclear. Signing the lease indicates that tenant understands and will abide by the terms, riders, and related attachments, including this handbook.

## **COMPLIANCE**

Tenants who violate any agreements, policies or procedures are considered out of compliance with the terms of their lease and may be subject to termination from the program and eviction from their apartment.

1. For first occurrences of non-compliance, written documentation will be considered a warning.
2. After a program participant has received a written warning, subsequent incidents of non-compliance will result in written documentation that the participant is being placed on conditional status.
3. Continued non-compliance may result in being placed on probation or dismissal from the program.

Note: Some behaviors are grounds for immediate dismissal. For example:

1. Any acts of violence or aggression, verbal or physical
2. Fraud, lying about income, willful damage to property
3. People living in the apartment not listed on the lease
4. Life safety issues such as: space heaters, candles, using the oven as a heating device, etc.

## **INSPECTION REPORTS**

The tenant and staff will perform an inspection immediately prior to move-in. A move-in inspection form will be completed by the staff and signed by the tenant and the staff member. Tenant will be provided with a copy of this form. Original will be kept on file and used during the move-out inspection.

Move-out inspection will occur after tenant has removed all personal belongings from the unit. Tenant and Family Promise staff will complete and sign the move-out inspection report. The report will indicate items, if any, for which tenant will be charged. This includes charges for hauling away items left in the apartment, in or around the dumpster, cleaning, etc. Those charges will be deducted from tenant's security deposit and any remaining balance returned within 30 days of move-out.

## **UTILITIES**

Gas and electric utilities are not included in your rent. An application must be made to the utility company (PECO, Lansdale Borough) in advance of your move-in to put these utilities in your name as the party responsible for payment.



## **SECTION 3: GENERAL POLICIES**

### **AUTOMOBILES**

One vehicle per apartment is allowed in the Hope Gardens parking lot. Park in the spaces marked with white lines. All automobiles must be registered with Family Promise Montco PA. Vehicles must have a current registration, inspection, and insurance. Illegally parked vehicles will be towed at the owner's expense. Parking for Hope on Fifth is in the rear of the property.

### **BICYCLES AND OTHER VEHICLES**

Motorcycles or mini-bikes must be parked in regular parking spaces with cushioning placed under the kickstand. These vehicles must be registered, licensed, and in operating condition or they will be towed away at the owner's expense.

Bicycles may not be stored in the walkways, lawns, hallways, or foyer. They should be stored in the bike shed in the playground at Hope Gardens, in the garage at Hope Forest, and in the backyard at Hope on Fifth.

### **CHILDREN**

All age-appropriate children will be enrolled in school. Family Promise Montco PA staff will work with parents to ensure their children are succeeding in school. The Case Manager will request academic documents to monitor their progress. Regular academic progress reports are required for each child. The Case Manager has connections to resources and academic-related programs to assist any child that may require extra help. Please refer to page 18 in the handbook for information on our Truancy Policy.

Tenants are responsible for the conduct of their children and their guests' children.

Children under age 13 may not be in the building without adult supervision.

Do not leave bicycles, toys, tricycles, etc., on sidewalks, in front of the apartment door, in the laundry rooms, or on any other part of the community property. Toys not properly stored may be thrown away.

Throwing objects such as balls, frisbees, etc. in the building, parking lot or courtyards is prohibited. Outdoor activities are for the outdoors.

Parents must always monitor their children while playing outside.

## **COMMUNITY APPEARANCE**

1. Alterations to the apartment, such as application of paint, decals, contact paper or wallpaper in any area is prohibited.
2. Tenant may put up curtains with tension rods, but any window covering requiring hardware installation requires the permission of Family Promise.
3. Tenant may not mount anything on the walls, including televisions.
4. All doorways and hallways must remain clear and open for safety purposes.
5. No signs, advertisements, notices, or other lettering may be exhibited, inscribed, painted, or affixed on any part of the outside or inside of the apartment community (holiday decorations acceptable, limited to the apartment door and inside of apartment).
6. Tenants may not install cable or satellite TV equipment.
7. Tenant is liable for damage caused to landscaping.
8. No equipment may be removed from any part of the building. All equipment must be permanently retained in its original location.
9. Tenants may not install chain locks, machinery, refrigeration, heating devices, air conditioning apparatus, washers, or dryers.
10. No flammable fluids, or explosives are permitted.
11. Waterbeds are not permitted.
12. Fireworks, firecrackers, space heaters, incense, and candles are prohibited.
13. Family Promise Montco PA is a drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free campus. This includes, but is not limited to, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, etc.
14. Real holiday trees are prohibited.

## **DISTURBANCES**

Keep volume of devices and conversation at a level that does not disturb other tenants or neighbors. If Family Promise receives complaints from other tenants or community members about disturbances, a non-compliance memo can be issued.

Use of profanity, threats, and/or yelling directed towards tenants, community members, or staff or volunteers may result in issuance of a violation.

Social gatherings of tenants and guests may not disturb other tenants or neighbors.

Use of drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol are not permitted.

Tenants are responsible for the conduct of their guests. Guests must be escorted to tenant's apartment, and only during visiting hours while tenant is present. (8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.).

### **INSPECTIONS**

Apartments may be inspected on a bi-weekly basis by staff. Tenants will be informed of scheduled inspections. Please refer to the Inspection Preparation Form on page 20 of the handbook.

### **GUESTS**

1. Tenants may have guests between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM.
2. Tenants are responsible for the behavior of their guests, including children.
3. A guest may not allow anyone access to the building for safety purposes.
4. Tenants may have overnight guests only with prior written permission of the Family Promise staff. Permission for an overnight guest must be requested at least one business day in advance. This is to ensure the safety of all program participants.
5. No tenant shall allow anyone to be in the building in her/his absence except with written permission of the Case Manager.
6. Photo ID for Case-Manager-approved after hours, overnight, or unaccompanied guests must be on file with the Case Manager.
7. Guests shall be escorted to and from the outside door by tenant. Tenants must accompany their guests when they are in common areas.

### **HOUSEHOLD ITEMS**

Family Promise has a shop that contains new and used household supplies. The stock varies. These are contributions that are available to all Housing Program participants.

### **KEYS AND LOCKS**

Each tenant will receive one apartment key per adult and one mailbox key, if applicable, at move-in. Tenants may not duplicate apartment or mailbox keys.

Alterations or replacement of locks or installation of bolts or other attachments on the exterior or interior of any door is not permitted. A spare key is available in the lock box outside of each unit.

### **GRIEVANCES**

Family Promise has a grievance form and process for handling concerns. If you would like to complete a resident grievance form, you may request one from the Case Manager.

## **LAUNDRY**

Laundry facilities are available on each floor of Hope Gardens. There are coin-operated washers and dryers, as well as a utility sink to soak or hand wash items. Please clean the lint screen when using the dryer. Items left in the laundry room will be disposed of.

## **PETS**

Tenants may not keep pets in the apartments or on the property. Tenants may not babysit for any animals. Visitors and guests are not permitted to bring pets on the premises at any time. Service animals are not considered pets.

## **SECURITY**

Entrances to the building are to be locked at all times. Doors may not be propped open or left ajar. This is for your safety and the safety of other residents.

Unknown or unauthorized persons are not to be admitted to the building. **Each tenant is responsible for accompanying guests in and out of the building and making sure the door is locked.**

**Security cameras are installed throughout the inside and outside of the Hope Gardens building in the public spaces for your safety. No cameras are installed inside the apartments. Cameras may be recording 24/7.**

Infraction of this rule can be cause for termination of your lease.

## **SECURITY CODES**

Hope Garden's residents will be assigned a security code to gain access to the building. Security codes are not to be shared. Parents may share the security code with children old enough to understand that they are not to tell the number to anyone. Tenants should not allow former tenants access to the building.

## **SMOKING POLICY**

For the health and safety of our tenants, staff and community members, Family Promise is a smoke-free entity. Due to the health effects of secondhand smoke, the increased risk of fire, and increased maintenance

costs, Family Promise Montco PA has adopted the following Smoke-Free Policy, which prohibits smoking on all owned properties. This prohibition covers all interior common areas (including but not limited to community rooms, community bathrooms, lobbies, reception areas, hallways, laundry rooms, stairways, and offices), all living units, and all outdoor areas within 25 feet of all buildings including entryways, courtyards, parking lots, and recreational areas. This policy applies to all Tenants, guests, visitors, contractors, volunteers, and employees.

The term "smoking" means inhaling, exhaling, breathing, carrying, or possessing any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, other tobacco product or similar lighted product, including electronic nicotine delivery systems, including e-cigarettes and waterpipe tobacco smoking (also known as hookahs).

The enforcement plan for this policy will include the following steps:

1. First Violation - Written warning letter with smoking cessation materials and referral to smoking cessation program.
2. Second Violation- Lease Violation Notice, 30-day notice with the option to remedy
3. Third Violation - Lease Termination Notice.

### **SOLICITING**

Solicitation of any type is not permitted within Hope Gardens. Tenants should notify staff if solicitors come to apartment doors.

### **TRASH DISPOSAL**

Hope Gardens: Trash is collected twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Place all trash in tied plastic bags or other secure containers and dispose of in the dumpster in the parking lot. Place all trash INSIDE of the dumpster and not on top of or beside it.

Hope Forest: Wednesday is the weekly collection day for trash and recycling. See <https://boroughofambler.com/departments/trash-recycling-yard-waste/> for more information.

Hope on Fifth in Lansdale: Thursday is the weekly collection day for trash and recycling. Have your trash/recycling receptacles out the night before in the rear alley to ensure pickup.

If you have large trash items, please see the Case Manager about arranging a special pick-up or other disposal alternatives. There is a fee charged by the trash hauler. **You may NOT leave furniture or other large items in the parking lot or dumpster at Hope Forest, or in the yards or porches at Hope Forest and Hope on Fifth.**

## **FIRE PRECAUTION**

Fire regulations prohibit tenants from storing any items in the area where the water heater and furnace are located.

**\*\*The best way to stop a fire is to prevent it before it starts. \*\***

- \* Empty waste and trash containers daily.
- \* Dispose of newspapers, magazines, and grocery bags regularly.
- \* Store all matches in tightly closed metal containers.
- \* Clean grease and spilled food daily from the cooking range and oven.
- \* Keep curtains, towels, potholders, etc. away from cooking range top.
- \* Always keep household equipment clean and in good repair.
- \* Have worn and frayed electrical cords replaced immediately.
- \* Avoid overloading electric wiring circuits.
- \* Never leave the oven door open to provide heat to the apartment.

Report fires to the Fire Department and the Office immediately. Always give an accurate address to aid fire units in locating the fire. The Family Promise Montco PA emergency phone number is 267-405-3348.

**\*\*\*\*CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT or CALL 911: \*\*\*\***

**HOPE GARDENS ADDRESS:**

**31 S. Spring Garden Street, Ambler, PA 19002**

**HOPE FOREST ADDRESS:**

**330 Forest Avenue, Ambler, PA 19002**

**HOPE ON FIFTH ADDRESS:**

**109 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Lansdale, PA 19446**

## SECTION 4: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

### CASE MANAGEMENT

Each program participant must meet with the Case Manager weekly. The Case Manager and the tenant agree on a regular set time of their meetings. If the tenant or Case Manager cannot keep the appointment, the other person should be informed *in advance* and another appointment scheduled. Client should contact the Case Manager if s/he is going to be more than 10 minutes late. If client is 20 minutes late it will be considered a missed appointment. **It is the responsibility of the client to schedule, keep, and/or reschedule all appointments.**

A Service Plan will be agreed upon within the first 30 days. The Case Manager and tenant both participate in the preparation of this plan. The Case Manager will evaluate the progress of each tenant. This will ensure that the service plan meets the tenant's needs and supports progress toward independent living.

Each tenant will also complete a permanency plan within the first 45 days of entering the Family Promise Montco housing program. The permanency plan is the tenant's exit strategy, defining where tenant plans to live after the program and how much tenant must save to prepare for move out.

### CASE MANAGER & FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Participants are expected to demonstrate improved ability in independent management of their finances as they progress in the program. Tenants are required to contribute 10 percent of their monthly income to a savings account held by Family Promise. The savings account is held in Ambler Savings Bank and the only people with access to the account is the Family Promise Finance Manager and Executive Director. If at any time you would like a copy of your bank statement or bank receipts, a request can be made. Money held in this savings account will not be utilized or accessed for any reason other than savings purposes, unless tenant submits written request, requiring approval by the Case Manager. The Case Manager and tenant will complete a budget to further assist the development of savings goals. Goals should correlate with the exit strategy in the permanency plan. Tenants are required to save a minimum of 50 percent of their income tax return with Family Promise.

Tenants are required to share with Family Promise proof of all sources of income on a monthly basis, including but not limited to pay stubs, social security, child support, assets, proof of savings, W-2 forms, and other tax-related paperwork.

Tenants are required to give the Case Manager copies of their gas and electric bills for preventative purposes and to assist with resource connection.

Tenant's budget and savings will be reviewed on a regular basis. Unbudgeted expenses should be shared with the Case Manager for possible solutions. If a financial crisis is going to interfere with the timely payment of rent, inform the Case Manager ***before*** rent is due.

Tenants are required to work with Clarifi, a free credit-counseling agency, to improve their credit. This resource will assist tenants to identify permanent housing. The Case Manager can assist the tenant with this process.

### **MONTHLY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY MEETING**

On the third Thursday of each month, parents are required to attend our education program. Topics change from month to month and are driven by the interests and/or needs of the tenants. We welcome suggestions and collaboration on educational topics. Volunteers provide a community dinner and childcare while the adults attend the education piece. If unable to attend the education program, the Case Manager must be notified in advance. As a reminder, this is a required part of the program, but it is understood that emergencies can arise. Failure to notify the Case Manager may result in a non-compliance memo.

## **SECTION 5: PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

### Participant Records

Staff and volunteers at Family Promise Montco respect the privacy and confidentiality of tenant personal information. Family Promise has procedures and policies in place for staff and volunteers regarding client confidentiality and must comply with those procedures.

## **NOTICE ON TRUANCY**

It is a requirement that the children of the Family Promise Montco Housing Program attend school.

The truancy laws in the county are clear.

As part of the school attendance, if contacted by the school, Family Promise Montco Staff is legally required to provide information about your child's truancy.



The law states:

1. Children between the ages of 6 and 17 must attend school
2. A child's caretaker—parent, guardian, relative, or foster parent—is legally responsible for ensuring a child's attendance.

Failure to comply:

- Truancy is so serious that it can lead to an arrest, or the courts can become involved, and a truancy hearing held.
- The parent/guardian can be found guilty of a summary offense, which is usually punishable by a fine of \$300 for each truancy violation.
- The responsible party might also be required to complete a "parenting education program" and/or community service. Ignoring the legal Judgment means facing up to five days in the county jail.

# Family Promise Montco Apartment Inspection Checklist

APARTMENT #

DATE:

**BEDROOMS:**

- Vacuumed
- Clean clothing put away in closet or dresser
- Dirty clothing in hamper
- Floors and other surfaces clear of excessive clutter

**POINTS EARNED**

out of 4

NOTES:

**BATHROOM:**

- Floors clean
- Clear of excessive clutter
- Sink and tub clean (no mold or soap scum)
- Toilet bowl clean

out of 4

NOTES:

**HALLWAYS:**

- Vacuumed
- Free of clutter
- Nothing blocking entrances

out of 3

NOTES:

**KITCHEN/DINING AREA:**

- Food properly stored
- Stovetop and counters clean
- Floors clean
- Free of excessive clutter
- Dishes clean
- Kitchen sink clean, free of food particles
- Refrigerator clean and no science experiments growing in it ☺

out of 7

NOTES:

**LIVING ROOM:**

- Vacuumed
- Dusted
- Free of excessive clutter

out of 3

NOTES:

**GENERAL APARTMENT EXPECTATIONS:**

- Clean walls
- Trash removed
- Odor Free
- Maintenance issues promptly brought to the attention of staff.

out of 4

NOTES:

**TOTAL SCORE:**

out of 25

PASS (Total score of 18 – 25) NOT PASS (Total Score under 18)

Reinspection will be within four days.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF  
FAMILY PROMISE MONTCO HOUSING PROGRAM  
HANDBOOK**

I \_\_\_\_\_, have received and reviewed the FAMILY PROMISE MONTCO PA Housing Program Handbook.

I understand that I am responsible for compliance with the policies and procedures outlined herein. Any violations of these policies and procedures may result in my termination from the program and eviction from my apartment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Case Manager's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date