

AEOA Hibbing Homeless Shelter Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the ultimate goal of the shelter?

Our ultimate goal is to provide individuals and families experiencing homelessness supportive housing and other services to ultimately help them to secure decent, safe, and stable housing to improve the quality of their lives. We believe that everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

Will the facility be staffed 24/7?

Yes. Once renovations are finished, and the facility is completely open, there will be at least 4 staff in the building at all times.

Is the facility going to be locked?

This facility will have secure entrances and exits. When residents stay at the shelter, they will have their own room that will be locked so their personal belongings can be kept in there.

What are you going to do to protect me and my neighborhood?

This facility will be staffed 24/7, have cameras throughout the inside and outside of the building, and have secured entrances and exits. There are also curfews that residents will need to follow.

Have you worked with local law enforcement?

Yes, we have an existing working relationship with law enforcement, and we will continue to work with them to make sure that we are keeping our staff, residents, and community safe. This shelter will also be a resource for law enforcement as we will provide supportive services to community members who are experiencing homelessness or escaping domestic violence.

Do you take in the public at night, or during a certain time?

Since the facility will be staffed 24/7, we will accept residents at all times, depending on the availability of space.

Where are these folks coming from?

The residents at the shelter will not be people bussed in from around the Country. Many times, residents at the shelter are members of our community. Often, they are your acquaintances, neighbors, or old classmates. Many times, when an individual comes to us, they are at the lowest point in their life and just need an opportunity to start the rest of their life.

Will this shelter youth?

No, we are unable to take in homeless youth at this shelter, unless they are accompanied by a caregiver. Youth who are homeless will be referred to the County or Lutheran Social Services.

Are there rules that residents will have to follow when they stay here?

Yes, there are rules that residents will have to follow. When residents enter the shelter, they are required to sign a contract that states the shelter's rules. If they have reoccurring behaviors that violate the contract, residents will be asked to leave.

What type of services, if any, will be provided?

Residents will work with a housing case manager to find housing, connect with programs, and be referred to other needed services. Residents at our shelter are provided with countless resources to strengthen and support them to be able to become self-sufficient. These resources may include but are not limited to:

- On-going case management
- Assistance filling out SNAP Application
- MNsure Navigation (provide health insurance)
- Chemical dependency services
- Expedited diagnostic assessment for mental health services
- Assistance with Section 8 Housing Application
- Access to local landlord list
- Access to food shelves
- Financial assistances for first month's rent deposit
- Legal Aid for any warrant resolutions
- Adult Basic Education (GED preparation)
- Head Start
- Assistance filing out financial assistance application
- Home buyer classes and down payment assistance
- English Language Learning program
- Tax Preparations services
- Arrowhead Transit
- Employment Services (resume assistance and interview preparation.)
- And more

Will there be other service providers in the facility?

Yes, we cannot do this work alone. AEOA partners with many different organizations and service providers to best equip residents with programs and resources they may need to be self-sufficient once they leave the shelter.

Will there be faith-based services provided?

AEOA will not be provided faith-based services. However, we provide residents with multiple resources to ensure their personal success. If residents believe that being a part of a faith-based community is one of these resources, we will assist them in finding a congregation within the community.

Where are they going to eat or procure food?

The facility is equipped with four kitchens where residents will be able to cook and store food. Each room will also be equipped with a mini fridge and microwave.

When people who stay at the shelter need medications, how is this handled?

Medications are secure, as they are kept with our staff in a locked box.

Will there be storage available for those housed?

When residents stay at the shelter, they will have their own room that will be locked so their personal belongings can be kept in there. If residents have bigger items to store, there may be limited storage space available.

Is the facility handicap accessible?

Yes. The building was previously used as an assisted living facility. Once AEOA owns this building and completes renovations for this facility to function as a homeless shelter, it will remain ADA compliant.

Will it be a smoke-free facility?

Yes.

Will you allow pets?

Pets will not be allowed within the facility unless there is a letter from a doctor explaining that the animal is a companion animal.

Are there going to be drugs/alcohol allowed?

No drugs or alcohol are allowed on the premises.

Are sex offenders going to be housed there?

No, sex offenders will not be allowed to be residents in the shelter.

Are reoccurring bad behaviors accepted when residents are staying at the shelter?

When residents enter the shelter, they are required to sign a contract that states the shelter's rules. If they have reoccurring behaviors that violate the contract, residents will be asked to leave.

Where do people who are staying at the shelter go if they make bad choices there?

When a resident at the shelter violates the rules, they will be asked to leave. However, they will not be immediately kicked out. We will provide them with their options for other housing support opportunities that include but are not limited to, the Itasca County, International Falls, and CHUM shelters.

How long do clients stay at the shelter?

Our emergency shelter services are based on a 30-day model. However, with the realities of housing in this area, if residents can show progress on their goals, we will allow them to stay longer until they can find safe and stable housing.

What is the success rate of staying in the shelter?

Over the last 3 years, 63% of residents have been successfully housed after staying in our emergency supportive housing.

Would you consider Section 8 successfully housed?

Yes, we view Section 8 housing as successfully housed. There are many situations that do not always allow individuals the financial opportunity to afford market-rate housing, such as receiving disability benefits, working for minimum wage, a fixed income, etc. Section 8 provides individuals with a decent, safe, and stable living environment at a subsidized rate, allowing them to remain self-sufficient.

What is the occupancy rate?

Our current housing options are 100% occupied 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I know that there have been services provided in Hibbing at the Rodeway for the last couple of years. How has this run?

In 2019, AEOA started renting rooms as a warming shelter from the Rodeway in Hibbing. This has grown over time, and now 18 rooms are continuously rented at all times. Since additional rooms have been added, AEOA has increased its capacity from serving 99 individuals in 2019 to serving 235 individuals last year. Because the housing being provided is located in an operating hotel, we have limitations of what we can and can't do right now.

When the relocated and improved shelter is operational, we will be able to enforce more security measures, curfews, and control who enters and exits the building. The facility will also be staffed 24/7.

Who is the oversight regulating committee?

The City of Hibbing, our Funders, and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

Where are you getting the funding to operate the shelter?

We currently receive grants from St. Louis County to operate emergency supportive services out of the Rodeway in Hibbing. A large portion of this grant is used to pay rent for the hotel rooms and 2 scattered site apartments. By not having to pay rent any longer, those funds can be put into more staff and more services to be able to sustain the shelter.

Are the grants to operate the shelter reoccurring? How do we make sure this shelter continues to run?

Yes, for years AEOA has applied for and received funding to operate our emergency supportive services. Additionally, AEOA has a Planning department that assists our Housing department with searching for grant opportunities as necessary and applying for them when appropriate.

What is this cost going to be for me?

There will be no cost to community members. If community members are interested in volunteering their time or making a donation, they are more than welcome to do so.

Will you be taking volunteers to help?

Yes, we will be accepting volunteers to help. Volunteers will be required to go through a vetting process, including a background check, to ensure the safety of our staff and shelter residents. We will announce when we are ready to accept volunteers for those interested in donating their time.

How can I donate?

Make a donation online at www.givemn.org/story/Hibbingshelteraeoa

Mail a donation to:

*AEOA Attn: Hibbing Shelter
702 South 3rd Ave
Virginia, MN 55792*

We are also accepting new, or like new, items for donation. Accepted items include:

Hygiene Products

- *Soap, Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Floss, Toilet Paper, Feminine Hygiene Products, Sunscreen*

Baby Items

- *Baby Diapers, Pull-Ups, Wipes, Formula*
- *Pack and Play*
- *Car Seats (Cannot be expired - no more than 5 years old)*

Bedding

- *Sheets, Blankets, Pillows*

Clothing (Adults, Children, and Babies)

- *Shirts, Pants, Socks, Hats, Jackets, Gloves, Boots, Shoes, Rain Gear*

Non-Perishable Food

- *Pasta, Rice, Cereal, Granola Bars, Canned Fruit/Vegetables, Nuts, Canned Meat/Fish (Chicken, Tuna), Coffee, Dried Beans*

Drop off Locations

- *AEOA 702 3rd Ave South Virginia, MN 55792*
- *AEOA Weatherization 2900 E Beltline Ste 9 Hibbing, MN 55746*

Can you tell me more about the Youth Foyer that you run in Virginia?

Owned and operated by AEOA, the Virginia Youth Foyer is an independent and permanent living facility for youth who are homeless and in need of permanent housing. The building consists of 13 efficiency units and two 2-bedroom units. Youth play an active role in creating community within the Foyer as support groups, cooking groups, parenting classes, GED prep, and more take place on-site. Specialists in mental health and chemical health assist in assessment, goal planning, and case management for those young people most in-need.

Can you tell me more about Bill's House that you run in Virginia?

Owned and operated by AEOA, Bill's House Homeless Shelter in Virginia consists of four units for emergency housing and eight units for transitional housing. Individuals can reside in emergency housing units for a maximum of 30 days and 90 days in transitional units. Residents of Bill's House receive one-to-one case management supportive services including assistance in meeting basic needs, financial assistance, counseling, and referrals to important resources. The ultimate goal is to help them stabilize their lives, work on self-sufficiency, as well as secure safe and stable housing. AEOA also currently operates two emergency apartment units in Hibbing utilizing the same support model as Bill's House, which will be relocated into the Hibbing Shelter.

Will you close Bill's House after you open this?

No, we will continue to operate Bill's House in Virginia. This Hibbing Shelter will increase our capacity to house those seeking shelter and provide needed supportive services.

How is the housing availability in our area right now?

According to our most recent Community Needs Assessment, ten percent (10%) of community respondents right in our community had friends or family members staying with them temporarily

because they couldn't afford housing right now. Did you know this means that by Minnesota's definition of homelessness, the individuals living with their friends or family are technically experiencing homelessness?

Market-rate housing rental options are available in the region. However, not all individuals and families can afford the cost of rent for these units while still meeting their other household needs. Did you know that \$24.90 is the average hourly wage a full-time worker would need to make in order to afford a modest two-bedroom rental home? Unfortunately, market-rate housing is not always affordable, even for those who work full time.

The housing choice voucher program, also known as Section 8, provides assistance to very low-income families to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Housing can include single-family homes, townhouses and apartments and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. However, the availability of decent and safe housing units that accept this program are limited, which results in the region's units being fully occupied and a long and growing waitlist for Section 8 housing. This means that people will continue to go without housing that is affordable for them.

Many individuals and families cannot access the housing options available to them, due to various reasons, including but not limited to the inability to pay the cost of rent, being on the Section 8 waitlist, criminal background check, rental history, lack of references, etc. Further, the need for emergency shelter far exceeds the availability of shelter options in Northeastern Minnesota.

What if this shelter doesn't work?

We have many years of experience providing emergency supportive housing services to the communities that we serve. AEOA owns and operates Bill's House and the Youth Foyer. With that said, we cannot do this work alone. We have a strong and proud history of collaboration within the region and have developed many partnerships with service providers and public entities across our service area. We currently have working partnerships with Range Transitional Housing, Hibbing HRA, Legal Aid, Range Mental Health, and Bois Forte. We also know we need to work with the community members of Hibbing. Again, we welcome community members to volunteer or contact AEOA when they have concerns. At AEOA, we believe that we are stronger together.