



# FOCUS Ministries

---

HOPE FOR INCARCERATED AND NEWLY RELEASED WOMEN

## **FOCUS REENTRY PROGRAM GUIDELINES TRANSITIONAL-LIVING/SUPPORTIVE-LIVING**

APRIL 13, 2023 UPDATE (HLK)

**FOCUS REENTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW****PURPOSE**

The FOCUS Reentry Program is a Christ-centered reentry program for women reintegrating from a correctional facility in Tennessee. Participants live in a therapeutic home while receiving opportunities for education, employment, relapse prevention, transportation, and mentorship. The FOCUS Reentry Program includes a complete continuum of reentry support that includes Transitional-Living (Supportive-Living), Sober-Living, and Independent-Living homes. The purpose of this program is not merely to reduce recidivism, but also to provide opportunities for participants to become productive members of their community by making meaningful contributions.

**FOCUS REENTRY PROGRAM LOCATIONS**

- FOCUS Hope House
  - State-Approved Transitional-Living (Supportive-Living)
  - 2330 Old Callahan Drive, Knoxville, TN 37912
  - 8 beds
- FOCUS Freedom House
  - Sober-Living
  - 1414 East Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37398
  - 4 beds

**PARTNERSHIPS**

The FOCUS Reentry Program is a collaborative effort of three groups: the FOCUS Reentry Program Leadership Team, expert allies, and the local church. The program team facilitates a safe, structured, and supportive home environment. Caring staff and volunteers work together to help the whole person, the whole way. Our expert allies provide specialized education, skill-building tools, and support that help participants navigate the unique obstacles of women in the reentry process. Church attendance is a key component of the FOCUS Reentry Program. Participants attend a worship service on the weekend as well as a Christ-centered recovery program once a week. As part of a church family, participants establish healthy connections, find hope in their spiritual journey, and have opportunities to serve in their community.

**FAITH-BASED VALUES**

Scripture is both a voice of authority and a guide for all that FOCUS Ministries seeks to accomplish. This program offers a Christ-centered approach to recovery, which includes weekly classes and mentorship from a Biblical worldview, group prayer, and other spiritual disciplines. Although no participant is forced to be a Christian to participate, it is the foundation of all FOCUS programs. The passage below, selected from Isaiah 61:1, serves as a guide to describing the intent of the staff and volunteers of FOCUS Ministries.

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.”*

- Isaiah 61:1

**TRANSITIONAL-LIVING (SUPPORTIVE-LIVING) PROGRAM PHASES**

Each program phase of development requires a minimum number of days of clear drug screens in addition to courses of study and community service. Participants advance based on merit and may complete the entire Transitional-Living portion of the program in six months. Participants who do not meet phase requirements may take longer to complete the program. Additionally, participants who wish to defer graduation after completing the first four phases may remain in the program for up to three months to continue preparations for life after the program for a total of nine months in the program.

Required courses may include, but are not limited to:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Anger Management
- Relapse Prevention
- Healthy Relationships
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Peer Recovery and Self-Help Strategies
- Health and Wellness
- Conflict Resolution
- Trauma Recovery
- Successful Parenting
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Job Readiness
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Adult Education
- Stress Management

**PHASE 1**

30 days — During the first weeks of the reentry program, participants adjust to a new environment, obtain important resources, and prepare for employment. Participants are also invited to learn about spiritual disciplines and serve in the community. Phase 1 requires approximately 30 hours per week of group and independent coursework.

**PHASE 2**

30 days— Participants begin working sustainable wage jobs and focus on recovery skills. This phase requires letting go of the past and embracing a brighter future. Participants are encouraged to serve in the context of a local church or ministry. Phase 2 requires approximately 20 hours per week of group and independent coursework.

**PHASE 3**

60 days — Participants focus on long-term change, new responsibilities, and family restoration. This phase takes longer to complete but develops self-discipline for long-term success. Phase 3 requires approximately 20 hours per week of group and independent coursework.

**PHASE 4**

60 days — Participants place a greater emphasis on preparing for independent living. Participants prepare a home plan that ensures the participant will have a supportive network of community resources and appropriate housing. Phase 4 requires approximately 20 hours per week of group and independent coursework.

**PHASE 5**

Graduation & Aftercare — participants graduate from the reentry program and are eligible for aftercare support and rental housing as available.



## **FOCUS REENTRY PROGRAM GUIDELINES TRANSITIONAL-LIVING (SUPPORTIVE-LIVING)**

### **ENTERING THE PROGRAM**

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must meet the following requirements for admission into the FOCUS Reentry Program Transitional-Living Home.

- Applicants must be women reintegrating from a correctional facility in Tennessee.
- Applicants must demonstrate a willingness to live in compliance with all Reentry Program Guidelines.
- Applicants must be able to pay for their housing costs. Applicants who do not qualify for the RHP Housing Grant or other assistance must prepay \$500 at the time of admission to cover housing costs.
- Applicants must not be active on the Tennessee Sex Offender Registry.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications must be mailed to our mailing address: P.O. Box 27274, Knoxville, TN 37927 or emailed to [reentry@focustn.org](mailto:reentry@focustn.org).

#### **ADMISSION AND TRANSPORTATION**

New participants are admitted to the FOCUS Reentry Program immediately upon release and complete the intake process. FOCUS staff coordinates the arrival of new participants who are transported directly from the correctional facility to the reentry home. Participants may not be transported by a friend or family member. Participants are drug tested within thirty (30) minutes of arrival and complete intake paperwork.

#### **ADMISSION FEE**

Participants must ensure that their housing costs are covered for the first five weeks upon admission. Some participants may be eligible for a Reentry Housing Program (RHP) grant through the State of Tennessee or housing assistance from another entity. Participants who are not eligible for a housing grant are asked to pay a non-refundable fee of \$500 upon admission to cover housing costs during the first five weeks of the program. After five weeks, participants may pay rent on a weekly basis.

#### **RENT REQUIREMENTS**

Each participant pays \$105 rent on a weekly basis. These funds help to offset the cost of housing, utilities, internet, cable, transportation, and other key components of the program. In addition to rent, each participant is required to set aside \$20 per week in the participant's Student Savings Account to prepare for independent living. Saved funds may be accessed for independent living expenses with the approval of FOCUS staff.

**GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS****RESIDENCE**

The FOCUS Reentry Home operates as a family home. Each person has value and works together to create a safe, stable, and supportive home environment.

**MEALS**

Participants are responsible to prepare their own meals the majority of the time, but often take turns preparing a family-style meal. These family mealtimes promote unity and an atmosphere of fun within the group.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Participants have household responsibilities that include cleaning common shared spaces within the home, occasional assistance with yard work on the premises, and maintaining personal spaces. Clear and continual communication is key for participants and staff to enjoy a peaceful, orderly environment.

**SCHEDULES AND SHARED SPACES**

Participants adhere to the timelines for curfew, quiet hour, lights-out, and transportation. They demonstrate respect for other housemates regarding light, sounds, and scents that may cause disturbance to others. Participants show respect for themselves and other housemates by wearing appropriate attire and maintaining personal hygiene. Participants may not use the personal items of others without permission or take items belonging to FOCUS Ministries without permission.

**SUPERVISION**

All rooms and participant belongings are subject to search. FOCUS staff confiscates prohibited items, and the responsible participant(s) receives corrective action, which may result in dismissal.

**LANGUAGE AND MEDIA**

Offensive language and inappropriate media have no place in a Christ-centered home.

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

To maintain an environment of mutual respect, we adhere to the conflict resolution method mentioned in Matthew 18:15-35. Rather than allowing miscommunications and misunderstandings to escalate, we speak the truth in love and seek forgiveness, understanding, and unity. The FOCUS Reentry Program does not tolerate acts of aggression, abusive language, insubordination, deception, or manipulation.

**VISITATION**

Visitation with family members or approved friends may take place during participant passes, not at a Transitional-Living residence. No person may enter the residence or its premises without permission from the appropriate FOCUS staff member. Family members or friends who wish to deliver personal items to a participant at a Transitional-Living residence must coordinate with an appropriate FOCUS staff member.

**SMOKING**

FOCUS Ministries believes nicotine is harmful to your health and strongly advises against the use of cigarettes, tobacco, and e-cigarettes. While this is the case, FOCUS does not prohibit the use of nicotine products in designated areas and at designated times. Participants who choose to smoke cigarettes or e-cigarettes must do so in the designated smoking area. Smoking is not permitted at FOCUS events or in a FOCUS vehicle.

**HOUSE HUDDLES**

Each week, FOCUS staff and participants meet together for a house huddle. Meetings begin with a devotional time. Staff and participants then discuss the previous week's successes and growth opportunities. Relevant information for the upcoming week is communicated, and any questions, comments, or concerns are addressed. Because every person on the team has value, every participant has a voice during these meetings.

**WEEKLY COMMUNICATION SHEETS**

Participants and staff maintain open communication through the use of the Weekly Communication Sheets which may include paper or electronic schedules, requests, reports, or other documents that exchange information. Participants must complete these sheets on a weekly basis and turn them in on time.

**TRANSPORTATION**

The FOCUS Reentry Program provides transportation assistance for transitional-living participants to attend classes, church, work, FOCUS outings, and other key appointments. FOCUS also provides transportation for participants to go to the store on a consistent schedule. Participants communicate their transportation needs with FOCUS staff well in advance. Participants may not accept transportation assistance from anyone other than a FOCUS team member without permission.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

The FOCUS Reentry Program advises that each participant focuses on her own recovery and personal development rather than engaging in romantic relationships for a period of one year after incarceration. Experience shows that participants who do so have a higher reintegration success rate and enjoy healthier romantic relationships long-term. In alignment with the FOCUS Ministries Statements of Belief, the FOCUS Reentry Program does not condone sexual relationships outside of the Biblical institution of marriage. Sexual and romantic conduct of any kind is prohibited at the FOCUS residence or any FOCUS outing.

**PRIVILEGES**

Participants obtain additional privileges through the FOCUS Reentry Program over time as they complete program requirements, model respectful behavior, and demonstrate trustworthiness. Irresponsible behavior, insubordination, or violations of program guidelines may result in a delay or revocation of privileges. Some program privileges may include:

- After thirty (30) days of successful participation, participants in phases 2 through 4 are eligible to submit participant Pass Requests and may gain greater freedom with passes over time. Please see the participant Pass Request section for a full list of participant Pass Privileges.
- After demonstrating trustworthiness, participants who have a valid driver's license are eligible to drive a vehicle to approved locations with permission from FOCUS staff.
- Participants may earn additional privileges or awards for exemplary performance.

**SUBSTANCES AND MEDICATION****ILLEGAL DRUGS**

Participants are prohibited from using and possessing illegal drugs and paraphernalia for the duration of the FOCUS Reentry Program, whether at the FOCUS residence or any other location. Participants are tested for drugs by the FOCUS staff weekly and at random. Every participant who fails a drug test is dismissed. The FOCUS Staff shares the drug test results with the participant's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within twenty-four (24) hours.

**ALCOHOL**

Participants are prohibited from consuming, purchasing, and possessing alcoholic beverages for the duration of the FOCUS Reentry Program, whether at the FOCUS residence or any other location. Participants are also prohibited from consuming products with alcohol content in a manner against the recommended use. Participants may be subject to alcohol testing. Every participant who consumes, purchases, or possesses alcohol is subject to dismissal. FOCUS Staff shares the reason for dismissal with the participant's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within twenty-four (24) hours.

**OTHER PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES**

Participants are prohibited from consuming, purchasing, and possessing any other substance that has psychoactive properties for the duration of the FOCUS Reentry program, whether at the FOCUS residence or any other location. Psychoactive substances are chemical substances that act primarily upon the central nervous system where they alter brain function, resulting in temporary changes in perception, mood, consciousness, and behavior. Examples of psychoactive substances may include but are not limited to Kratom, Cannabidiol (CBD), or inhalants. While these substances may be bought and sold legally in the State of Tennessee, the psychoactive properties of these substances are counterproductive to recovery from substance misuse disorder and are prohibited in this program. Every participant who does not comply with psychoactive substances guidelines is subject to dismissal. The FOCUS Staff shares the reason for dismissal with the participant's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within twenty-four (24) hours.

**MEDICATIONS**

Participants are permitted to use over-the-counter medications or prescription medications if the medications meet all parole or probation requirements. Participants report all medications and take them only as directed. FOCUS Staff monitors the use of medications to ensure participants remain in compliance. Participants who do not comply with medication guidelines may be dismissed. The FOCUS Staff shares the reason for dismissal with the participant's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within twenty-four (24) hours.

**Prescription Medication:** Participants remain in compliance with probation or parole requirements regarding prescription medications. Participants authorize the release of prescription medication information to FOCUS staff, and all prescription medication must be taken as directed by the physician. Taking prescription medication in a manner that is more than the recommended dosage or outside of the prescribed method is prohibited. Participants may not receive the prescription medication of another person or give their prescription medications to anyone else. Participants who wish to stop taking their prescribed medications or want to modify their medications in any way must do so under the direction of their physicians.

**Over-the-Counter Medication:** All medications must be reported to the FOCUS Staff and must be taken as directed for the intended purpose.

### **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

As part of the FOCUS Reentry Program, FOCUS staff facilitates regular and random urinalysis drug screens to ensure compliance with program guidelines. Participants are solely responsible for their own urine samples. If metabolites of a prohibited substance are found in the urine of a participant, the participant is responsible for the result. Each participant is responsible for the food, drink, medicines, and any other substance that enters her own body.

### **PASS REQUESTS**

Participants are not permitted to leave the premises of the FOCUS residence, school, work, clinics, church, or other FOCUS outing location without permission from FOCUS staff at any time, for any reason. After thirty (30) days of successful participation in the FOCUS Reentry Program, participants in phases 2 through 4 are eligible to submit Pass Requests to spend time with loved ones. Participants are expected to attend a weekly worship service and adhere to the FOCUS Reentry Program Guidelines even while on a pass. Passes are privileges that are subject to delay or revocation as part of corrective action.

### **SUBMITTING A REQUEST**

- All participants who wish to leave on a pass must submit a participant Pass Request to FOCUS staff at the assigned day and time. Late requests will not be accepted.
- Participant Pass Requests must include a full description of the participant's transportation arrangements, all whereabouts, planned activities, and persons with whom the participant will interact. Deviations from the participant Pass Request are strictly prohibited. The FOCUS staff will not approve passes to spend time alone with a romantic partner.
- Omission or misrepresentation on participant Pass Requests is a serious guideline infraction and results in corrective action that may include dismissal.
- Pass Requests are reviewed by the FOCUS staff first and may also require approval from the participant's Probation or Parole Officer.
- The approval or denial of each pass request is communicated to the participant by Wednesday.

### **PASS REQUIREMENTS**

- Passes may take place on any day during the week, except during scheduled meetings like house meetings and or recovery meetings.
- Participants who wish to attend church with their family members on Sunday morning may do so, but must provide verification of church attendance.
- Passes may begin no earlier than 8 am and may end no later than 8 pm.
- Day Passes may be no longer than eight (8) hours.
- Participants who have advanced to Phase 4 of the program may exchange three (3) Day Passes for one (1) Overnight Pass for a total of twenty-four (24) hours.
- Pass Allowances renew every thirty (30) days or when a participant completes a phase. Passes do not roll over to the next thirty (30) days.
- Participants may not use FOCUS vehicles during passes.



**PASS ALLOWANCES**

The following chart shows the monthly allowance for Pass Requests. Pass Allowances renew every thirty (30) days or when the participant advances to the next phase. Participants may choose how and when they use their passes as long as all requirements are met.

| PROGRESS | PASSES | NOTES                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase 1  | 0      | Participants are not eligible to take passes during Phase 1. Participants are encouraged to invite loved ones to church, Celebrate Recovery, or FOCUS outings to spend time together. |
| Phase 2  | 4      | Participants may take 4 passes during Phase 2.                                                                                                                                        |
| Phase 3  | 8      | Passes renew every 30 days for a total of up to 16 passes during Phase 3.                                                                                                             |
| Phase 4  | 10     | Passes renew every 30 days for a total of up to 30 passes during Phase 4. Participants may exchange 3 Day Passes for 1 Overnight Pass.                                                |

**FINANCES**

With the assistance of the FOCUS staff, each participant will learn fiscal responsibility, establish a personal bank account, and fund a participant Savings Account to prepare for independent living.

**PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS**

The FOCUS staff assists participants in setting up personal bank accounts at a ministry partner bank. Participants may not enter into financial agreements with third parties without the permission of the FOCUS Reentry Program.

**RENT AND SAVINGS**

Participants pay \$105 on a weekly basis. In addition to rent, each participant is required to set aside \$20 per week in her Student Savings Account to prepare for life after the program. Saved funds may be accessed for independent living expenses with the approval of FOCUS staff.

Participants pay rent and savings payments through electronic transfers by 10 am on Friday each week to pay for the previous week's stay.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION AND DISMISSAL**

The FOCUS Reentry Program attempts to assist every participant toward a successful reintegration and maintains open communication about expectations. When corrective action is needed, most participants require only a coaching conversation to get back on track, but when a participant is unwilling to cooperate, a corrective action consequence is carried out. Egregious guideline infractions that affect the security of the participants and staff or failed drug screens warrant immediate dismissal from the program.

**CONSEQUENCES**

A participant who does not comply with the guidelines is given written notice of the guideline infraction, a redirection, an explanation of why the guideline is important, and a consequence. Consequences may include loss of a current privilege, delay in gaining a new privilege, additional responsibilities, or dismissal.

**DISMISSAL**

A participant who is dismissed from the FOCUS Reentry Program receives a verbal notification of the dismissal. A FOCUS staff member supervises the participant's departure, and he or she is not permitted to return to the home without the express consent and escort of a FOCUS staff member. The FOCUS Reentry Program sends an Exit Report to the Parole or Probation Officer within twenty-four (24) hours. When a participant is unavailable to gather personal belongings, FOCUS staff gathers the participant's belongings. The funds from the participant's savings accounts, minus due rent, are transferred to the participant in a timely manner. A participant who chooses to leave the FOCUS Reentry Program voluntarily before graduation follows the same departure procedure as a dismissed participant.

**GRADUATION AND AFTERCARE**

After a participant has completed four phases of the FOCUS Reentry Program, she is eligible to apply for graduation. The graduation application includes an approved aftercare plan and an essay of what God has done in her life during the program. Graduates of the FOCUS Reentry Program are encouraged to apply for our sober-living accommodations or additional months at our transitional-living accommodations, which provide appropriate housing and access to supportive services. Graduates may elect to participate in Phase 5: FOCUS Aftercare. FOCUS Aftercare includes continuing case management, mentor support, and compassionate accountability.

Upon graduation, the participant receives a graduation certificate and assistance in implementing the aftercare plan, with guided access to the participant's Savings Account that is to be used for independent living expenses only.

Graduates are encouraged to maintain relationships with mentors and FOCUS staff after graduation and are always considered part of the FOCUS Family.