



# Member Handbook

Peoples Oakland  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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[www.peoplesoakland.org](http://www.peoplesoakland.org)  
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## Mission Statement

Peoples Oakland strives to be a premier recovery and wellness center, and is committed to holistic, comprehensive, member driven recovery. Guiding all Peoples Oakland services and activities is a philosophy of recovery based on real life experiences nurtured by peer support, hope, self-help, and collaborative relationships with professionals.

Peoples Oakland continues as a leader in providing recovery based comprehensive psychiatric and social rehabilitation services for Allegheny County adults with severe and persistent mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

## Organizational Goals

### Goal I.

*Independence and advocacy:* Peoples Oakland believes in raising the self-esteem of its members in order that growth, development, and recovery are possible. Members will always be encouraged to participate in the planning and governance of the organization to live this belief. Furthermore, Peoples Oakland Staff will speak out and advocate for consumer participation and independence.

### Goal II.

*Program Development:* Peoples Oakland will maintain a safe, friendly, "family feeling" facility where members participate in challenging and stimulating activities, make friends, get involved, and pursue job opportunities. Programs will be based on holistic wellness and recovery principles and will continually be re-evaluated and evolve according to member needs.

### Goal III.

*Vocational Rehabilitation:* Peoples Oakland believes that work can build strong self-esteem, recovery and quality of life. It is for this reason that we will work with you to develop your full employment potential. Peoples Oakland uses creativity and advocacy to match meaningful jobs with interested members.

## Peoples Oakland History

Peoples Oakland is a private, nonprofit corporation. It was established in 1971 as a community planning and organizing agency to improve the quality of life for individuals living in the diverse Oakland community of Pittsburgh.

In the 1980's, Peoples Oakland's focus shifted from community organizing and advocacy to the actual provision of mental health services to fill targeted service gaps. This change in focus resulted from the community's effort to respond to the needs of hundreds of state hospital patients who were discharged and became residents in Oakland and surrounding neighborhoods during a time when the current array of clinical and community support services was virtually non-existent.

By 1988, Peoples Oakland had become a "highly regarded" psychiatric rehabilitation program in the state of Pennsylvania according to a landmark nationwide study by E. Fuller Torrey, "Care of the Seriously Mentally Ill: A Rating of State Programs."

In 1991 Peoples Oakland and the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic were awarded a competitive three-year research and demonstration grant by the National Institute of Mental Health to study the Peoples Oakland model of psychiatric rehabilitation and employment outcomes. Since the successful completion of the project and publication of results, the project has grown into a major component of Peoples Oakland programming for persons with psychiatric disabilities seeking employment.

In 1999 Peoples Oakland purchased a four-story office building at 3433 Bates Street and began transforming its operations to better meet the wellness and recovery needs of its members and the surrounding Pittsburgh community.

The building includes an open entry, resource center with 6 computers with high-speed internet connection and a wellness/fitness area on the first floor and a commercial kitchen, recreation area and a large deck on the second floor. Most importantly, Peoples Oakland staff and members continue to focus on recovery and wellness to assist persons with psychiatric disabilities in living and working in the community.

Today, Peoples Oakland offers a broad range of services to nearly 200 community members throughout Allegheny County. All Peoples Oakland services are designed to deliver holistic, comprehensive, member-driven recovery. These services are grounded in a philosophy of recovery based on real-life experience, peer support, self-help, and collaborative relationships with professionals.

## Welcome to Peoples Oakland Today!

Congratulations! You have completed the Intake Process and are now part of the Peoples Oakland community.

Your input is very important to staff and members of Peoples Oakland. Peoples Oakland has an **OPEN-DOOR** policy. All staff are available to talk to members in person or over the phone. Please feel free to make any suggestions to staff to help improve your and others' experiences here. In addition, there is a House Meeting, open to all members, on the third Tuesday of every month where you can give input and suggestions on Peoples Oakland activities. We participate in the Consumer Action and Response Team of Allegheny County (CART) consumer dialogues. There are other opportunities available to serve on various committees and boards at Peoples Oakland and throughout Allegheny County.

Peoples Oakland is managed by the Executive Director, Lezetta L. Cox. The Program Supervisors and the Quality Assurance Manager report directly to the Executive Director. The staff report to the Program Supervisors. In addition, many members contribute to the running of the programs by working in temporary paid positions and/or volunteering.

The specific services available to you depend on which program you have enrolled in. You will review this member handbook with a Peoples Oakland staff member who will be your guide in becoming familiar with the activities available. We hope this orientation is helpful.

Peoples Oakland subscribes to the principles and philosophy of a community support and recovery-oriented system of care for persons with mental illness. A CSP (Community Support program) is defined as "an organized network of caring and responsible people committed to assisting persons with long-term mental illness to meet their needs and develop their potentials without being unnecessarily isolated and excluded from the community." The Community Support concept includes the entire array of treatment, life support, and rehabilitation services needed to assist persons with severe, disabling mental illness to function at optimal levels within the community.

Peoples Oakland places great importance on working in cooperation with your treatment team. We recognize that we represent one important element of an overall "community support system" which includes psychiatric treatment (medication), housing support, income support, emergency services, etc.

# Non-Discrimination Policy Statements

**Subject:** Equal Employment Opportunity

**To:** Peoples Oakland Staff

**From:** Lezetta L. Cox

Peoples Oakland does not, in any way, exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin (including limited English proficiency), place of birth, ancestry, citizenship, familial status, veteran status, disability or sexual orientation in hiring or employment opportunities therein. Employment opportunities shall be provided for applicants with disabilities and reasonable accommodations shall be made to meet the physical or mental limitation of qualified applicants or employees.

This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and/or the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, as amended and the City of Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances Title VI, Article V.

In case of questions concerning this policy, or in the event of a desire to file a complaint alleging violations of the above policy, please contact:

Lezetta L. Cox, Executive Director  
Peoples Oakland  
3433 Bates Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
412-683-7140 x 240  
email: [lezettac@peoplesoakland.org](mailto:lezettac@peoplesoakland.org)

## **Discrimination complaints may also be filed with:**

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
Phone: 717-787-1127  
Email: RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
PA Regional Office for Civil Rights  
801 Market Street, Suite 9300  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3134  
Phone: 1-800-368-1019  
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
(EEOC) Pittsburgh Area Office:  
William S. Moorhead Federal Building  
1000 Liberty Avenue, Suite 1112  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Phone: 1-800-669-4000

PA Human Relations Commission  
Pittsburgh Regional Office  
301 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 390, Piatt Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-565-5395

**Subject:** Nondiscrimination in Services

**To:** Peoples Oakland Members

**From:** Lezetta L. Cox

Peoples Oakland does not, in any way, exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin (including limited English proficiency), place of birth, ancestry, citizenship, familial status, veteran status, disability or sexual orientation in admission to, participation in, or receipt of services and benefits of any of its programs and activities.

Program Services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modification shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

In case of questions concerning this policy, or in the event of a desire to file a complaint alleging violations of the above policy, any member and/or guardian may contact:

Lezetta L. Cox, Executive Director  
Peoples Oakland  
3433 Bates Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
412-683-7140 x 240  
email: [lezettac@peoplesoakland.org](mailto:lezettac@peoplesoakland.org)

**Discrimination complaints may also be filed with:**

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
Phone: 717-787-1127  
Email: RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
PA Regional Office for Civil Rights  
801 Market Street, Suite 9300  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3134  
Phone: 1-800-368-1019  
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

PA Human Relations Commission  
Pittsburgh Regional Office  
301 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 390, Piatt Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-565-5395

# Programs and Services

## **Social Rehabilitation Program**

Peoples Oakland’s social rehabilitation program aims to foster a community which gives members a sense of belonging and social connectedness. Peoples Oakland’s social rehabilitation center is staffed with master’s level counselors and therapeutic support staff. Counselors work with members to form reparative relationships from long-term maladaptive thinking and adverse life experiences. Additional therapeutic support is offered through daily support groups, meditation, and various psychoeducational groups based on member feedback and therapeutic needs.

Services Include:

### Social and Recreational Services

Social supports are crucial to a successful life for anyone. Recreational activities give places for social skills to form and be practiced in collaborative relationships with staff and through peer interaction.

- Breakfast Club
- Board Games, Pool & Ping Pong
- Arts & Crafts
- Bingo
- Community Outings

### Nutrition and Fitness Services

Nutrition and Fitness activities assist members in understanding and applying a holistic approach to creating healthy lifestyle.

- On-Site Fitness Center
- Walking Group
- Intra-agency Sports League

### Employment Services

Peoples Oakland offers a wide range of employment support services. Support and opportunities are tailored to each member’s strengths and needs. Services offered include:

- On The Job Training Opportunities
- Resume Development
- Job Search & Interview Assistance
- Linkage To Benefits Counseling

### Resource Coordination

Coordination with any necessary community supports to meet member needs/pursue member goals.

- Link to housing coordination
- Obtain Identification
- Apply for SSI/SSDI
- Apply for Health Care



## **Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services**

Following Boston University's "Choose-Get-Keep" process, members who participate in Peoples Oakland Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, work to develop strengths and achieve goals in the following domains: Living, Learning, Working, and Socializing.

Services Include:

### 1. Functional Assessment

- You'll meet with a PRS worker to talk about how you're doing with things like living at home, working, pursuing educational goals, and making friends. You'll do activities together to figure out what skills you want to improve or what you need to help you do better.

### 2. Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP)

- After talking about how you're doing, you and your PRS worker will set some goals for things you want to get better at. The plan will show which goal to work on first and what you'll do together to reach that goal.

### 3. Skill Development & Resource Acquisition

- Every week, you'll do activities to help you reach your goals. This might include joining groups at Peoples Oakland or working one-on-one with your PRS worker. All the activities will help you build skills and get the resources you need to meet your goals.

## **Bridging the Gap**

Peoples Oakland has expanded our programs to provide mental health and community supports to individuals suffering from chronic, severe mental illness who are re-entering society after incarceration. The services offered at Peoples Oakland will help bridge the gap between mental health services and re-entry to achieve greater recovery, improved quality of life, and reduced likelihood of recidivism for reentrants.

### Counseling Services

As a member of the BTG program, you are required to meet with the BTG counselor biweekly until you are successfully connected with a mental health care provider, such as a therapist, psychiatrist, or outpatient services.

During your first session, the BTG counselor will complete an informal assessment to better understand how your mental health is affecting your daily life and to identify which services would be most beneficial to you. This assessment includes questions such as:

- What life events led you to the BTG program?
- How has your mental health impacted your experience with incarceration, hospitalization, or homelessness?
- What does your support system look like?
- Do you have any physical health concerns?
- What is causing you the most distress right now?
- What would you like assistance with?
- What do you envision your life looking like in five years?

### Service Plan Development

Based on this initial assessment, the BTG counselor will work with you to develop a service plan that outlines specific goals to work on during your time in the BTG program. This plan provides structure to help guide your progress, and it may be formalized with your input if deemed appropriate.

### Resource Coordination Services

In addition to counseling, you will also meet regularly with the BTG resource coordinator, who will help identify any additional community support that may assist you in reaching your goals. The resource coordinator works closely with both you and the BTG counselor to ensure you are connected with the appropriate mental health services.

You will be referred to additional mental health support services, such as therapy or psychiatric care, within two weeks of your intake appointment to ensure that you have the necessary resources to continue your recovery and personal growth.

This service is designed to provide you with the support and guidance needed to navigate the mental health system and achieve long-term stability.

## **Panels**

At Peoples Oakland, we are proud to offer all of our members the opportunity to participate in our Panel Program, a valuable service that allows members to share their experiences with mental illness and the mental health care system. For years, we've partnered with local universities to provide students with firsthand knowledge from individuals who have lived experience. This collaboration has led to the development of panels that contribute to the education of future mental health professionals.

### *How It Works*

As a member of Peoples Oakland, you have the option to serve on one of our member panels. We support your participation by providing bus fare or transportation via the Peoples Oakland van, along with lunch or dinner during panel events.

Before participating, members complete panel training, which includes:

- A review of how consumer involvement positively impacts education.
- Peer support from previous panel members, offering guidance on what to expect.
- Public speaking preparation to help you feel confident in sharing your story.
- Assistance in crafting your personal testimony, allowing you to highlight what's most important to you.
- A discussion about the emotional aspects of sharing your experiences in a public forum.

### *Program Benefits*

This program is designed to empower you to become an advocate for mental health within the community, fight against mental health stigma, and acknowledge the important work you do every day. Upon completing the training, you'll have the opportunity to share your testimony at one of our annual panels.

We encourage you to take part in this unique opportunity to make a difference in the mental health field by sharing your story and experiences with future professionals. Your voice can inspire change and contribute to reducing stigma in the mental health community.

## Other Benefits

### ***Fitness Center***

Peoples Oakland takes a lead in improving the physical health of individuals with a mental health diagnosis(es). The Wellness Center opened in early 2002. The space includes exercise equipment such as a weight machine, elliptical and treadmill, floor exercise/movement space. Peoples Oakland staff and trained community professionals help oversee the activities in this exciting area of our building.

*\* All members need to have their PCP complete a Medical Information Form and returned to their counselor before using the Wellness Center.*

### ***Wellness Spaces***

The fourth floor offers a variety of spaces for members to participate in wellness activities that enrich their recovery journey. The meditation room invites members to unwind and practice mindfulness, while the gaming center, featuring Xbox and Wii, provides a fun setting for social interaction. Additionally, the arts and crafts area is stocked with supplies for creative expression.

### ***Resource Center & Computer Use***

Located on the first floor, this area houses the member computer stations, a small library and reading area, as well as many pamphlets for a variety of community resources, including bus schedules.

As a member of Peoples Oakland, you are permitted to use the computers in the Resource Center on the first floor. You will have the ability to access the internet and have use of software such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. In addition, there is a printer available for limited printing.

### ***Volunteer Opportunities***

Peoples Oakland member volunteers assist in managing the building and activities. Members can volunteer as little or as often as they want. Member volunteer hours are recorded, and members are accorded special recognition each year. Volunteers can assist in all areas: Housekeeping, Snack Shack, Reception, Drop-In, and special tasks assigned by staff.

### ***Monthly House Meetings***

On the third Tuesday of every month, all members are invited to attend the House Meeting. This is an opportunity for you to have input into the activities and services offered by Peoples Oakland. We need your feedback and hope you attend!

### ***Monthly Calendar, Email, & Letters***

Peoples Oakland provides monthly calendars of events/activities/outings, and the daily schedule of groups. Calendars are made available quarterly, meaning 3 months at a time to better help plan for upcoming events. April, May, June are published at the same time, for example. However, unexpected changes do occur, so PLEASE call ahead if you have a specific question about an event, activity, group, or outing. Calendars are available on our website and Facebook page, as well as on-site in the building as we encourage you to stop in and pick one up!

Paper letters are sometimes mailed to members, so please make sure we have your current mailing address. Please let your counselor know of any changes. We also have a Member Group email list. If you have an email address and would like to be informed of any updates via email, please let us know! All email addresses remain confidential and are not visible to other recipients when a group email is sent.

### ***Find Us Online!***

Visit the Peoples Oakland website at **[www.peoplesoakland.org](http://www.peoplesoakland.org)** for the latest on current activities and upcoming events, check the monthly calendar, review the mission statement, etc. You can even email your counselor.

We also have a Facebook page, showcasing photos from outings, post important notices and calendar information. **[www.facebook.com/peoplesoakland](https://www.facebook.com/peoplesoakland)**

## Health & Safety Information

***“Peoples Oakland will promote and provide a safe and clean environment for all persons served, personnel, and visitors.”***

That is our policy, and we need everyone’s cooperation to uphold this practice. The Peoples Oakland Health & Safety Committee meets quarterly with the Executive Director to discuss matters pertaining to providing a safe and clean environment. You are welcome to share with staff any health & safety concerns.

**Emergency Exits:** Each of the four floors of the Peoples Oakland building has lighted emergency signs pointed to the nearest exits.

**Emergency Exit Maps:** All major locations and all individual offices have an “emergency exit map” indicating the nearest exit routes.

**Fire Extinguishers:** Are conveniently located and maintained regularly. Staff will take charge of the use of any fire extinguisher.

**Emergency Evacuation:** In the event of a drill or an emergency evacuation, staff will assist you in locating the nearest emergency exit and exiting the building using one of the two inner stairwells or the emergency stairway exit off the deck. The first floor exits directly outside using the nearest door.

**Emergency Evacuation Meeting Spot:** After exiting the building, you will be directed to turn right on the sidewalk and proceed on Zulema St. to the front of the small brick building next door (Daycare Center). Staff will direct you to the proper spot. A head count will be taken to ensure that all have safely exited the building.

**First Aid Kits:** Are readily available and maintained by the Health & Safety Committee. There is a first aid kit located on each floor, in the van, and available for use in personal vehicles that may be used for program transportation. There is also a flashlight available on each floor to be used in emergencies. Staff will assist you if you need some materials from a first aid kit.

**Medical Conditions:** You are welcome at Peoples Oakland any time. However, if you are suffering from a bad cold, flu, or any contagious condition, please stay home and take care of your illness. In addition, if you are taking any prescribed or over the counter medication or home treatment that may cause you any problem, please let your counselor know so we are able to assist you if necessary. For safety's sake please do not bring excessive amounts of medication, keep in a secure location, do not share with others, and dispose of it according to package directions.

**Seclusion and Restraint:** Peoples Oakland has a “no use of seclusion or restraint policy.” Staff may only take any action to avoid physical injury and to escape dangerous situations.

### ***Smoke-Free Workplace***

Peoples Oakland offers a smoke-free work environment to all members and staff. No smoking is allowed inside any buildings, sites, or vehicles operated by Peoples Oakland. Smoking is permitted only in outside designated areas as identified. Smoking at off-site activities (i.e. events, trips, etc.) will be permitted only in designated areas as determined by supervisory staff. Smokers are responsible for keeping the areas clean and free of smoking debris.

## Staff Biographies

### **Lezetta L. Cox - Executive Director**

Lezetta has over 20 years of non-profit administration, finance, human resources, and executive management experience. She is currently responsible for planning, developing, and implementing Peoples Oakland policies and objectives in accordance with the organization's mission, board of directors, and corporate charters. She serves as the CEO of the organization and oversees the day-to-day operations of funded programs, projects, and agency initiatives.

### **Allison Haley, LCSW, CPRP - Associate Director**

I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh's graduate Social Work program in December of 2016. I began my time with Peoples Oakland during an undergraduate internship in 2012 and have absolutely loved working here ever since! I am passionate about faith, mental health recovery, and corrections system reform. In my free time I enjoy running, hiking, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.

### **Andrea Tempalski, MSW, CPRP - Documentation & Quality Assurance Manager**

I first became involved with Peoples Oakland as an undergraduate student intern in 2007 while attending the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. I continued my education at Pitt and earned a master's degree in Direct Practice Social Work with a certificate in Mental Health. I began working at Peoples Oakland in 2010, assisting with various fundraising and other community-based projects. In 2023, I accepted the role of managing the agency's documentation policies, outcomes, and overall compliance. I also provide counseling services for a small caseload. I love relaxing and walking nature trails, watching movies & true crime documentaries, and spending time with loved ones & pets!

### **Joel Heiney, BA - Intake & Resource Coordinator**

I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2020 with a degree in sociology and political science, with special interests in inequality and social change. In the summer of 2021 I joined Peoples Oakland, where I assist members in making sure their basic needs are met so that they can better engage in their mental health recovery. I manage the food pantry at Peoples Oakland and can often be found in our drop-in center talking or playing pool with our members. In my free time, I like playing video & board games, baking, camping, and spending time with friends, including my cat!



**Jen Lallemand, MA - Social Rehabilitation Counselor**

Jen earned her Master of Arts Degree in Community Counseling from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from West Liberty University, with special interests in Philosophy and Sociology. She has been working in the human services field for nearly 35 years across a variety of settings. She facilitates the Creative Writing Group and Gardening activities, while working individually with Members on personal counseling goals. She enjoys the simple things in life and loves cooking, getting out with her dog, going kayaking, swimming and camping.

**Kiara Davis, MSW - Bridging the Gap Counselor**

I graduated from California University of Pennsylvania with a bachelor's degree in social work. I then earned a master's degree in social work from Carlow University. In June of 2021, I joined Peoples Oakland, where I oversee the Bridging the Gap Program. Working with this program has made me passionate about increasing my knowledge and education so that I can better serve the population I work with. Outside of work, I enjoy walking trails, watching movies, and spending time with family and friends.

**Joshua Harris, BS - Psychiatric Rehabilitation Worker**

I graduated with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Economics from the University of Pittsburgh in April of 2022. I first became a part of the Peoples Oakland family in the spring of 2021 where I started as an intern, a little over a year later I began as a full-time employee. I have a passion to help others and encourage one to achieve their goals and live a healthy and happy life. Outside of work I enjoy going to the gym, playing video games, cooking, watching sports, and spending time with family and friends.

**Brayden Kent, BS - Psychiatric Rehabilitation Worker**

I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2024 with a degree in Psychology. I began my master's in social work later that year with the goal of obtaining a LSW and then a LCSW. I started here as an intern at the beginning of 2023 and ended up with a part time position. That position then became full time in May of 2024. I was brought on to help with our Psych Rehab program and I have continued my excitement for meeting new members and helping them achieve their goals. When I am not at Peoples, I like to spend my time in the gym, exploring local events, or taking naps.

**Wilma Sirmons, MSW - Events Planner**

Wilma works part time at Peoples Oakland. Most members remember Wilma from her years of supervising the Social Program when it was on Oakland Ave. Wilma can be found socializing with and assisting members, planning day trips, and can be heard making many outreach calls.

## Your Rights and Responsibilities

You have the right...

- An individual has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to be free from physical and mental harm.
- An individual has the right to receive services in a culturally respectful and nondiscriminatory environment. An individual has the right to not have any services denied due to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, age, disability, or income.
- An individual has the right to keep and use personal possessions in a manner that is reasonable to the service and location. Any necessary limitations shall be clearly communicated and defined, universally applied, and documented.
- An individual has the right to offer an opinion and belief.
- An individual has the right to have information and records concerning service treated in a confidential manner, as required under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and the act of August 1, 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-191, 110 Stat. 1936).
- An individual has the right to be able to contribute to, have access to, and control release of the individual record.
- An individual has the right to be assisted in a referral to an alternative or additional service if needed.
- An individual has the right to have your complaints handled, in a prompt manner in accordance with Peoples Oakland Grievance Procedures, without retaliation or barriers to services. An individual has the right to have the assistance of a personally chosen representative or advocate in expressing a complaint.
- An individual has the right to participate in the day-to-day operations of Peoples Oakland by talking to staff and making suggestions, participating in consumer surveys and CART interviews, and attending and participating in meetings such as the House Meeting and other appropriate planning meetings.
- An individual has the right to be provided services in an environment free of abuse, exploitation, including financial exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, and neglect.

*Additional rights specific to PRS program services*

- An individual has the right to receive PRS in the least restrictive setting that fosters recovery and promotes growth.
- An individual has the right to access competent, timely and quality service to assist with fulfillment of a goal.
- An individual has the right to express a goal which is individualized and reflects informed choice concerning selection, direction or termination of service and service plan.
- An individual has the right to choose a service based on individual need, choice and acceptance and not dependent on compliance or participation with another treatment or rehabilitation service.

You have the responsibility...

- To follow your psychiatric treatment plan as recommended by your psychiatrist, medical doctor and treatment team.
- Meet with Peoples Oakland staff to sign required authorizations.
- Keep any scheduled appointments.
- If you cannot attend an activity that you have signed up to attend, call Peoples Oakland to cancel.
- To follow Peoples Oakland rules as listed in the Members Handbook and posted in the drop-in area
- To respect the rights and privacy of your fellow members.
- To raise any problems or concerns you may have about your membership at Peoples Oakland at any time by talking to staff and in meetings.
- To formally raise any unresolved problems or concerns by making use of Peoples Oakland Grievance Procedures.

## Confidentiality and Consents

Members of Peoples Oakland are entitled to receive services with the expectation that information about them will be treated with respect and confidentiality by the staff. We maintain strict compliance with rules and regulations regarding the confidentiality of your records and information.

Peoples Oakland follows the Pennsylvania Public Code 55 Mental Health Procedures – Subsections 5100.31 through 5100.39 regulations on Confidentiality of Medical Records ([www.pacode.com](http://www.pacode.com)). We also comply with federal rules under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The important points are:

Peoples Oakland will not release any protected health information regarding you to any other person or agency without your authorization. There are exceptions for emergencies and other legal requirements. An example of a legal requirement is that Peoples Oakland staff are mandated reporters under the PA Child Protective Service Law and are required to report suspected child abuse. In the case of an emergency, only the minimum necessary information will be provided. An example of an emergency is if you threaten to harm yourself or someone else.

The staff of Peoples Oakland do communicate and work closely with your treatment team (ICM's, therapists, psychiatrists, residential staff, etc.) and thus, will need to obtain your authorization to share relevant information. Your counselor will explain what information is necessary to share. These authorizations are obtained as needed and usually on an annual basis. Your counselor will explain the reasons for any authorization for release of information you may need to sign and give you a copy of the forms if you like.

Peoples Oakland staff work as a team and all staff are involved with all the members. To serve you better, it is important that staff are aware of the goals and important issues of each member. Important information about each member may be communicated to all staff. To ensure your confidentiality, staff will not discuss any individual members in the public areas.

A Notice of Peoples Oakland Privacy Practices was given to you at Intake. It contains important detailed information about Peoples Oakland's privacy practices. You can receive a Notice of Privacy Practices from any staff member at Peoples Oakland. It is also available in the reception area and can be downloaded from our website –[www.peoplesoakland.org](http://www.peoplesoakland.org)

## Notice of (Treatment) Policy for Peoples Oakland Members

Peoples Oakland programs are designed to work hand in hand with treatment services provided by your psychiatrist and other treatment professionals. Fewer symptoms mean that you will be able to enjoy the benefits of membership at Peoples Oakland.

It is important for all Peoples Oakland members to follow the treatment plan that is recommended by their psychiatrist and other treatment professionals. Members who stick to their treatment plans tend to experience fewer symptoms and are more successful in their recovery. Members who give feedback to their doctor about how the treatment is working tend to have treatment plans that fit their needs.

Sometimes you may talk or behave in a way that signals that you are not feeling your best. This may be because your medications are not working properly or because you are not following the doctor's instructions completely or for some unknown reason. When this happens, Peoples Oakland staff members are trained to recognize these signals and respond. Responses include:

- Help you make an appointment or phone call to your therapist, case worker, or doctor.
- Encourage you to talk to your therapist or psychiatrist about what is happening to you.
- Offer to help you get to an emergency room for an evaluation of your condition.

Sometimes members feel that everything is OK, and they feel strongly that they do not need to see a doctor about what is happening to them. If you feel this way, it is always your choice.

Peoples Oakland has a moral and legal responsibility to help you as best as we can. We may decide that you cannot come to Peoples Oakland programs until you meet with your doctor, and we are satisfied that you and your doctor are doing everything possible to control your symptoms. Only the Executive Director can make this decision after other attempts have been made. If this happens, Peoples Oakland staff will:

- Notify your treatment team of the decision.
- Give you a letter explaining this policy decision and the conditions of your return to services.
- Give you a list of ways to obtain an evaluation of your condition.

- Assist you in getting someone to help you make an appointment.
- Ask you to sign a consent form that allows us to talk to your doctor about his/her treatment recommendations and whether you have been following them.
- At your request, provide contact information at the County Office of Behavioral Health to appeal the decision.
- Meet with you by appointment to plan your return to Peoples Oakland services.
- Give you the phone number of the Allegheny County Peer Support Warmline to help you find service options: 1-866-661-WARM (9276)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read this policy and it has  
*Print Name of Member or Applicant* been explained to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Member or Applicant Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## Peoples Oakland Guidelines

*Please note that a violation of guideline 2, 3, 4, 5 will result in a member's immediate suspension from the program. Violation of guidelines 6, 7, 8, or 9 will result in a verbal warning for the first violation and suspension from the program for a second violation of that guideline. These guidelines and the following Policy on Enforcement were developed by a committee of members in 2005. Staff members will be subject to discipline as described in Peoples Oakland's Personnel Manual.*

1. All members and staff are expected to show respect for all other members, staff, and passersby. This includes respect for ethnic heritage, religious preference, and sexual orientation as well as physical or mental difficulties.
2. We expect one another to come to Peoples Oakland without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Physical violence is strictly prohibited.
4. Weapons are strictly prohibited.
5. Any illegal activity will not be tolerated on Peoples Oakland's property.
6. Abusive language will not be tolerated.
7. There will be no borrowing or giving out money and/or cigarettes on Peoples Oakland's premises.
8. Members will not go into supplies and/or food items without permission, so that we can keep track of the use of Peoples Oakland's property.
9. Smoking is not permitted inside the building and is allowed only in designated areas outside.
10. Members, staff, and visitors to Peoples Oakland, in the office or at any function, are expected to dress and act in a proper manner.
11. Whenever the group, or part of the group, is engaged in discussion or planning for the needs of the group, the speaker must be treated with complete seriousness and respect.
12. Members are expected to sign in daily upon entering Peoples Oakland. This is required to qualify our organization for governmental funds.

13. A suggestion box will be kept in the drop-in area. Members are encouraged to write down their suggestions for Peoples Oakland. The Peoples Oakland's Executive Director and the Supervisors are also available to discuss suggestions with members directly. Current suggestions will be read and discussed at the next house meeting.
14. Prior to using the pool table, please review and follow the posted pool table rules.
15. Members should take personal responsibility for personal belongings and place found items in the Lost and Found box located in the Drop-In. Any item of value should not be placed in the box and instead given directly to a staff member. Although the staff will attempt to keep track of Lost and Found items, Peoples Oakland is ultimately not responsible for any lost items.
16. Staff and members are required to run programming in a timely manner.
17. Peoples Oakland may provide van transportation to some activities. A member may choose to provide their own transportation. Peoples Oakland will not be held responsible for a member's decision to use their own transportation. **Members must tell staff if leaving an event or the van and sign a release form.**

### ***Inactive Status***

If you have not attended Peoples Oakland activities for some time and have not been in touch with Peoples Oakland staff, your membership with Peoples Oakland will be closed. If you wish to return to Peoples Oakland, you will have to meet with our Intake Department to update your information.

### ***Withdrawal from Service***

Peoples Oakland programming is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw from the program at any time. If you no longer wish to participate in Peoples Oakland activities and do not want to receive any mailings or phone calls with reminders of activities, please let your counselor know. You may return to Peoples Oakland at any time by contacting the Intake Department.



## Policy on the Uniform Enforcement of Peoples Oakland Guidelines

### **A. Policy:**

Peoples Oakland has rules and regulations posted as Peoples Oakland Guidelines that must be followed to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of all those attending Peoples Oakland activities. Violations that call for a written warning or suspension from services of Peoples Oakland will be handled quickly, fairly and according to the following procedure. Violations by staff members will be handled according to Peoples Oakland's Personnel Policies and Procedures.

### **B. Procedures:**

1. Following an investigation of the reported violation, a Supervisor will make the decision on implementing a written warning or a suspension from programming. The Supervisor will make the decision based on the Peoples Oakland Guidelines as outlined in part D. below.
2. The Supervisor will inform the member of the decision in a private meeting. The member may choose to have another member or staff person attend the meeting with them as an observer. It is recommended that a staff observer (preferably the primary counselor) be present at the meeting.
3. The Supervisor will write a letter to the Member stating the reason for the warning or suspension, the duration of the suspension and any conditions that must be fulfilled for the member to return to Peoples Oakland. A copy of this policy and procedure and Peoples Oakland's Grievance and Problem Solving Policies will be provided to the member at this time. A copy of the letter will be placed in the member's chart in Section 6 Correspondence and a note describing the incident and outcome will be entered into the member's daily notes.
4. In the case of suspension, the member's treatment team is informed immediately by telephone by the member's counselor and through a cc'd copy of the notice letter that was delivered to the member.
  - Before returning to programming following a suspension, the member will be required to meet with the supervisor, primary counselor and, when possible, the treatment team to determine that all the stated conditions for return have been met. At this meeting and prior to the member's return to programming, a specific mutually determined goal item will be added to the member's individual service plan laying out a plan for how the

member and Peoples Oakland can work together to prevent the problem from occurring again.

- The executive director or appointee will observe or review this meeting and decide whether any or all pre-conditions have been met by the member wishing to return to the program. The executive director or appointee will decide if the person may return to the program, must remain on suspension or be terminated from further participation.

### **C. Right to Appeal and Problem Solving**

If the member disagrees with the decision, he/she can follow Peoples Oakland policies on Member Rights of Appeal of Service Decisions starting at Step 3 of the procedure by requesting a conference with the Executive Director.

### **D. Guidelines for Written Warnings and Length of Suspensions**

1. Infractions of Peoples Oakland Guidelines 2, 3, 4, and 5 are actions that pose a risk to the physical or emotional safety of others. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Pushing or striking another member, staff or visitor
  - Bringing a weapon onto the premises
  - Throwing an object
  - Acting in a threatening, intimidating or harassing manner toward another person
  - Theft from a member, staff, visitor or the agency
  - Any illegal activity
  - Extreme disruptive behavior while participating in any Peoples Oakland activity on site or in the community

Actions such as these will result in suspension from Peoples Oakland activities. Legal action may also be taken in the above instances.

- The first offense of this type will result in suspension for 1 month
- The second offense will result in suspension for two months
- The third offense will result in suspension for three months
- Following a third offense the member will be terminated from active service and must reapply to regain services

2. Infractions of the Peoples Oakland Guidelines 6,7,8, and 9 are actions such as but not limited to:
- Subject of complaints about unwelcomed asking of other members or staff for money or cigarettes
  - Abuse of any property
  - Strong verbal outbursts
  - Inappropriate language including cursing and profanity
- ≠ The first offense will result in a written warning
- ≠ The second offense will result in suspension from programming for 1 week
- ≠ The third offense will result in suspension from programming for 1 month
- ≠ The fourth offense will result in termination from active service and the member must reapply to regain services

## Grievance Process

Peoples Oakland values the involvement of members in the organization and functioning of the agency. As a Peoples Oakland member, you have a right to register formal complaints about specific issues relating to the general operation and management of the agency. You also have additional rights to appeal decisions regarding the planning and delivery of the individualized services you receive from the agency. Filing a formal grievance or appealing a decision regarding your services will never result in any retaliation or barriers to services.

These are the steps you should follow if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the general operation and management of the agency or if you wish to appeal decisions regarding the planning and delivery of individual services:

### ***Step One***

Talk about the problem right away with a staff member. Try to resolve the problem. Most concerns can be resolved by just talking it over with the responsible staff members.

### ***Step Two***

If you feel that your concern was not resolved to your satisfaction after STEP ONE, you may request a meeting to review the concern with your program's supervisor. The program supervisor must respond to your request in writing within five working days following the meeting.

### ***Step Three***

If you feel that your concern was not resolved to your satisfaction after STEP TWO, you may request a meeting with the agency's executive director.

They will help you document your concern in writing and will investigate it by meeting with the individuals involved and reviewing any related records. The executive director will provide a written response to your request within five working days following the meeting.

At your request, they will also give you information about external agencies that provide advocacy and/or legal services in the community.

### **Step Four**

If you feel that your concern was not resolved to your satisfaction after STEP THREE, you may request a review of the decision by the agency Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee is appointed by the Board of Directors and is made up of two board members, two staff members, and two consumer members.

The Grievance Committee will meet with you within ten working days following your request. They will investigate and document your concern and issue a decision, in writing, to you within ten working days following the meeting with you. Decisions by the Grievance Committee are final. The only exceptions are for appeals of individual services such as denial of services (i.e. program suspensions), changes in service plans or refusals to change service plans and/or termination from service. In these cases, there is one more step you may take.

### **Step Five**

If your concern is about the specific services you receive at Peoples Oakland and involves:

- Denial of services
- Change of service plan
- Refusal to change service plan
- Termination from services

You have a right to appeal the Grievance Committee decision (STEP FOUR) to the Allegheny County MH/MR Program. The Executive Director will provide you with contact information upon request.

*Please feel free to contact **Lezetta L. Cox** any time that you would like to speak directly to the Executive Director about any ideas you have for the improvement of Peoples Oakland and/or your membership.*

412-683-7140 x 240

[lezettac@peoplesoakland.org](mailto:lezettac@peoplesoakland.org)

## Locker Use Policy

Peoples Oakland has lockers available on the second floor in the Drop-In area for the use of members to store their belongings while at Peoples Oakland. Lockers are provided on a “first come” basis. To provide an organized method and safe usage of lockers, Peoples Oakland has established the following policy.

### ***Rights & Responsibilities of Members Locker Usage***

1. Members and Staff are permitted use of lockers on the second floor to store coats and personal belongings.
2. Peoples Oakland strongly suggests using a lock on the locker when storing any item and especially valuables such as money, jewelry, bus passes etc.
3. Combination Locks are prohibited.
4. Pad locks with keys may be used. A copy of the key must be given to the locker manager with the locker number you will be using. Staff can direct you to the locker manager.
5. Weapons, food, perishable or illegal items may not be stored in lockers at Peoples Oakland.
6. Peoples Oakland has the right to search lockers without notice.
7. Peoples Oakland will not assume responsibility for any items left in lockers.
8. All efforts will be made to return items left in lockers for more than one year to members.
9. Peoples Oakland has the right to disperse items deemed unreturnable.
10. If a waitlist for lockers accrues, any member who is assigned a locker but attends Peoples Oakland less than once per month will be asked to forfeit their locker.

# **No Combination**



# **Locks**

## Peoples Oakland Sportsmanship Rules for Sports and Life

Sportsmanship and how we handle winning, losing, and teamwork is a direct reflection of our own ethics in life. Sportsmanship, like ethics, concerns both the character and the actions of an athlete. The image you project as an athlete is a product of your character. Good Sportsmanship is not just what you do on the field or court, it is hopefully the way you conduct your life in general.

### ***Good Sportsmanship Rules***

1. The “Golden Rule” - Do to others as you would have others do to you.
  - Show respect for them if you expect it yourself
2. Remember who is in charge
  - Don’t argue with Coaches or Officials during the game. There are always going to be questionable calls, but they are in charge, NOT YOU!
3. Show respect for the officials
  - Officiators perform to the best of their ability to make sure the game is played fair and within the rules.
  - Mistakes are human and will happen during a game. Accept them and move on.
4. Recognize and appreciate good performances, even the opponents
  - Applause for an opponent’s good play shows courtesy and respect. It shows that you have a true awareness of the game and athletic ability
5. Take responsibility for your actions
  - Don’t blame others for your mistakes or find excuses for poor behavior
6. Expect proper behavior from your teammates
  - If you allow teammates to argue and scream at Coaches, Officials, and Players you are condoning this behavior
7. Look like a winner
  - Make sure your uniform is clean
8. Enjoy yourself and encourage enjoyment for others
  - Pump up your teammates. You need to show support for everyone.
  - Team Spirit counts a lot towards a winning season

***As an individual:***

- ✓ I will try to develop my skills to the best of my ability and to give my best effort in competition.
- ✓ I will compete within the rules of my sport.
- ✓ I will respect the dignity of every human being and will not be abusive or dehumanizing of another either as an athlete or as a fan.

***As a member of a team:***

- ✓ I will place team goals ahead of personal goals.
- ✓ I will be a positive influence on the relationships on the team.
- ✓ I will follow the team rules established by the coach.

***As a member of society:***

- ✓ I recognize that my behavior becomes a model others may choose to imitate and will seek to be a positive influence in my community.

**Athlete:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Team:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Coach:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sport:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Transportation

Parking is available in the three visitor spots in the front of the building (Bates Street side). Parking is very limited. It is suggested you do not attend Peoples Oakland expecting to have available parking. Street parking is available for up to one hour and is monitored by the City of Pittsburgh. Peoples Oakland does not pay for any parking to attend programming.

Public bus transportation is available to Oakland throughout Allegheny County through the Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) system. Schedules are available in the Resource Center and here: [www.rideprt.org/all-schedules/](http://www.rideprt.org/all-schedules/). The PRT Customer Service phone number is 412-442-2000. The TTY information number for use by persons with speech or hearing impairments is 412-231-7007. Peoples Oakland does not pay for bus transportation to attend programming.

Van transportation is available at no cost to attend some Peoples Oakland activities. These are planned and scheduled activities. If you take the Peoples Oakland van to an agency event and are getting another ride home, you must notify staff that you will not be returning in the Peoples Oakland van.



## Hours of Operation

**Monday:** 8:30 am to 4 pm

**Tuesday:** 8:30 am to 4 pm

**Wednesday:** 8:30 am to 4 pm

**Thursday:** 8:30 am to 4 pm

**Friday:** 8:30 am to 4 pm

**Saturday:** Closed

**Sunday:** Closed

\* Occasional evening hours are for special events/outings

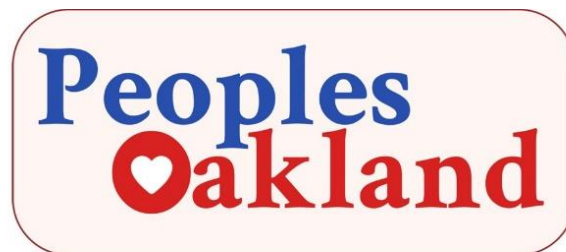
\* Closed on major holidays and as noted on our calendars

For more information, please check the monthly calendar, call, or visit us online

**412-683-7140**

**[www.peoplesoakland.org](http://www.peoplesoakland.org)**

**[www.facebook.com/peoplesoakland](https://www.facebook.com/peoplesoakland)**



*Cultivating a Culture of Love*

HOPE • INTEGRITY • RESPECT • EMPATHY • HUMILITY