

# FINAL SIMPLICITY VILLAGE MANUAL

5/17/19

## Simplicity Village (SV) Operations and Self-Maintenance

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### TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

**Villager:** An individual program participant who currently lives in a housing unit at the Village who has completed the probationary period.

**Probationary Villager:** A new participant undergoing a 4-week trial period to make sure that they can follow the Participant Agreement before being fully accepted as a villager.

**Village Monitor:** 3 to 7 participants elected to have additional responsibility and authority in the Village. A more detailed description of this role can be found in Section 5 of the Business Plan.

**Village Volunteer:** A non-resident or prior participant who is trained to assist in the operation and maintenance of the Village. They must be familiar with the Participant/Community Agreement and have filled out the Volunteer Registration Form and Volunteer Release Form, and a background check.

**CHAT Board of Directors: Chico Housing Action Team 501(c)3 B.O.D.** oversees the activities of the Steering Committee and the Village.

**CHAT Steering Committee (SC):** 5 to 7 members from the CHAT Board of Directors and appointed volunteers that meet once a month to refine, plan and direct the project. See Section 5 of Business Plan for additional details.

**Advisory Board:** Professional members of our larger community who have signed on to be available for consultation to provide technical expertise, training and for working with and training villagers to help start micro-businesses, lead skill building workshops and help build the tiny homes.

**Non Discrimination Policy:**

Simplicity Village does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, selection of village residents, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all village residents and members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, and vendors.

**VILLAGE GOVERNANCE**

Self-governance is a core value of Simplicity Village. This means that the success of the Village rests on not only the CHAT over-sight but also the participation of those who live there. There are three governing groups for making decisions related to the management of the Village. They are:

**1) Village Council (All Villagers)**

Every [day] at [time] the required weekly meeting will be held. Attendance is mandatory for all Villagers. Issues related to the organization of the Village will be discussed and voted on at this time. Specific roles will be identified and filled in order to maintain a safe and sanitary environment. The following applies to the Village Council meetings:

- Advance notice with documentation must be provided to the Front Gate Monitor for excused absences (i.e. work, school, medical), which must be approved by Village Council or Monitors.
- Excused absences may vote on policy issues prior to the meeting through absentee ballot.
- A quorum is established when over 50% of Villagers are present.
- Any decisions made at the Village Council Meetings are made with CHAT over-sight and must comply with the existing Participant/Community Agreement, Village Manual, and Operational Structure.
- Amendments to the Participant/Community Agreement and Village Manual may be proposed at the meeting and require 2/3 majority vote to pass.
- Amendments to the Participant Agreement and Village Manual must be reviewed and approved by the CHAT Board of Directors before taking effect.
- Expulsion from the Village may be appealed at the weekly meeting, and is decided upon by a majority vote of the Village Council, subject to CHAT Steering Committee approval.
- Informal meetings can be scheduled on other nights but will not be mandatory.

**2) Village Monitors**

Elections are held during Village Meetings to maintain a group of 5 to 7 Village Monitors. To become a Monitor member, a Villager must be nominated by another Villager. A majority vote of Villagers present then decides which nominees are elected. The elected term is two months. Monitors may serve consecutive terms. Elections are to be staggered so that the entire group of Monitors does not change at once.

The role of the Village Monitors is to uphold orderly management of the Village. Villagers elected as a Monitor are given the task of responding to incidents when a Participant/Community Agreement is broken and enacting the appropriate level of intervention as specified in this manual. A primary responsibility of Monitors is to act between meetings when urgent situations arise. For the issues addressed within this manual, it is the responsibility of the Monitors to ensure that the appropriate level of intervention is being enforced. A Monitor member may be removed from their position for violating this duty through a majority vote at a Village Meeting. When an incident occurs that is not described in this manual, it is up to the Monitors to determine the appropriate level of intervention.

All Monitor decisions are potentially subject to review by the entire Village at a Village Meeting. In this way, service as a Monitor is much like any other form of contribution to the operation and maintenance of the Village.

When a rule break occurs, any Villager may write an Incident Report. The Village Monitors then are responsible for verifying that the level of intervention is appropriate and notifying the alleged offender. From there, the alleged offender has three options:

- 1) Accept the Incident Report with the proposed level of intervention
- 2) Appeal the Incident Report at the next Village Monitors' meeting, in which case the level of intervention requires the vote of a majority of Monitor members
- 3) If the alleged offender still feels that the action is unjust they may appeal to the weekly Village Council Meeting subject to CHAT Steering Committee approval.

For incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion, the offender should be given a chance to appeal before taking their leave — unless the Village Monitors consider the behavior to be a threat to the Village, in which case the Village Monitors will call the Chico Police Department. The Village Monitors are to hold at least two regular meetings per week. During this time Monitor members:

- Set agenda for next weekly Village Meeting (any Villager can propose items)
- Review Incident Reports and listen to appeals
- Review Front Gate Log and make sure everyone is completing their shifts
- Deal with other issues relevant to maintaining orderly operation of the Village.

Impromptu Village Monitor meetings may also be necessary to address urgent situations.

Quorum to hold a Village Monitor meeting is to have at least 50% of monitors present, but an attempt should be made to notify all Monitor Members. Members of the CHAT Board of Directors or CHAT Steering Committee may also attend these meetings, but may not vote.

There is to be a designated “Monitor of the Day” as a point of contact for day-to-day operations.

### **3) CHAT Board of Directors (BOD) and CHAT Steering Committee (SC)**

The main governing role of the BOD and SC is to provide oversight. The purpose of this is to ensure that the Participant/Community Agreement and Village Manual are being upheld. In cases where the Village is not in compliance, and the Village Council has not taken action, the BOD and/or the SC may step in to take action at their discretion.

The BOD and SC are also responsible for ensuring that financial, legal, administrative, safety, and sanitation matters are being properly managed. Interface between the Village, the BOD and the SC will occur through the following:

**CHAT Steering Committee Members:** There will be at least 2 Villagers appointed to the CHAT Steering Committee (SC) for 6-month terms. To stagger terms, the second Villager Committee Member is appointed 3 months after the first. Villager Committee Members are appointed by the SC and may not simultaneously serve as Village Monitors.

**Village Monitors Liaison:** One Monitor member will be appointed monthly by the Village Monitors to attend SC meetings, serving as a liaison between the Monitors and the SC. At least one CHAT SC member will attend Village Council meetings.

## **VILLAGE SECURITY PLAN**

**The Front Gate Monitor controls** the only access in and out of the Village. Staffing the front gate is one of the most important duties at Simplicity Village. This will be a service of the Villagers. Only Villagers, Village Volunteers, BOD and SC members may enter the Village unaccompanied.

The Front Gate is to be staffed by at least two trained individuals during open hours (8am-10pm). At least one person must be a Villager. The second may be a Villager or a Village Volunteer. Their primary role is to be the “eyes and ears” of the Village during their shift. Staffing the Front Gate involves the following duties:

- Answer phone calls
- Register visitors and locate a Villager to accompany the visitor
- Document any disruption to normal operations in the Front Gate Log
- Inner perimeter checks; pick up litter in front
- For further details on this duty, see the “Front Gate Duties and Information” sheet posted at the Front Gate.

The gate will be locked between 10pm-7am. During this time, one person is to spend the night at the Front Gate cabin in case assistance is needed at the gate. In the case of an incident, the person on duty should alert the Village Monitors.

**Weapons** are not allowed on the Village site. Weapons are defined as firearms, knives (other than small pocket knives with 4” blade or less or those used for cooking), explosives of any type, clubs, or other striking implements. Chemicals such as Mace or Pepper spray must be checked at the front desk.

**Three Stages of Response** for maintaining a secure and orderly environment within the Village. Stage 1 is the least severe and most common type of response. Stage 3 is the most severe and least common type of response.

### **Stage 1: Village Monitors**

Village Monitors are responsible for maintaining order when urgent situations arise. For a full description of this duty see: Organizational Structure.

### **Stage 2: Intermediary Security Agency or a crisis care team**

When Village Monitors are unable to gain the cooperation of a disruptive Villager, they

are to contact the intermediary security agency or the crisis care team. A contract enables that agency to act on behalf of the Village in order to gain control of the situation. The phone numbers for the security agency and the crisis care team will be listed at the front desk.

### **Stage 3: Chico Police Department**

The Chico Police Department (CPD) is welcome to patrol the Village as they would any other neighborhood. In cases where the law is being broken and Villagers or the security agency are unable to gain cooperation of the offender, the police department will be contacted. The previous Stages of Response are to be tried first if appropriate.

Contact the Chico Police Department when a crime is committed or is in progress, or upon a victim's request. Trained Villager Monitors may resolve lower level crimes such as petty theft and minor criminal mischief.

### **INTERVENTION ACTION PLAN**

a) When a complaint that is not technically a rule break is cause for concern for members of the Village, the Monitors will meet with said Villager and discuss a plan of action to curtail the behavior. Early intervention typically helps prevent further and more severe action.

b) In cases of a complaint by one Villager against another when the complaint is not a clear rule break, a third party mediator will meet with the complainant and the alleged offender to discuss the issue and reach a resolution that is agreeable to both parties.

c) Minor rule violations (i.e. missed host shift, village meeting, etc.) result in 4 levels of intervention:

- o Level 1 – Verbal warning

- o Level 2 – Written warning

- o Level 3 – 48-hour expulsion from Village

- o Level 4 – Permanent expulsion from Village

d) Minor rule violations will be tracked for a 3-month rolling period.

For example: If you missed a shift on the 5th of October you would receive a verbal warning.

If you missed another shift on the 12th of November you would receive a written warning. If

you again missed a shift on the 9th of December you would then be on a 48-hour expulsion. If

you missed another shift on the 4th of January you would be permanently expelled. However,

if your 4th missed shift was on the 6th of January it would be treated as a level 3 again. And

if you had missed no shifts between the 5th of October and the 6th of January the January violation would be treated as a level one violation again.

e) Villagers reserve the right to work off minor rule violations by contributing extra hours towards the operation and maintenance of the Village. Missed host shifts may be made up by working 2x the number of hours missed. The Village Monitors may designate requirements for other minor rule violations.

f) More severe rule violations may require action at a heightened level of intervention even though the rule violation may be a first offense. The Village Monitors will deal with these rule violations on a case-by-case basis unless otherwise defined in this manual.

**Note:** In cases of violence and arson, the monitor will call Chico Police Department and stay with the offender, if practicable, and take written statements from witnesses and others with information about the incident.

g) All intervention actions require the agreement of a majority of Village Monitors.

h) In cases of expulsion from the Village, where the Villager is not an imminent threat to self or others, the Villager to be expelled will be given a reasonable amount of time, (typically 3 days) to make arrangements. No resident who is not an imminent threat to others will be expelled after 8pm. A Village 3 day cease and desist order can be delivered to a Villager found to be in a fourth violation of an Agreement by a Monitor, after a majority vote of the Monitors or the SC or Village Council.

i) Villagers may appeal their expulsion or 3 day order at a Village Council meeting, which may include actions for addressing the problematic behavior that caused their expulsion. A final Council majority vote will either uphold or revise the expulsion, subject to CHAT Steering Committee approval.

## **VILLAGE SAFETY PLAN**

a. Villagers shall report a fire or other emergency to 9-1-1 through the use of a personal cell phone. All Villagers also have access to a phone at the front desk in emergency situations.

b. Villagers will be notified of a fire or other emergency by word of mouth, and if necessary will relocate and evacuate based upon the designated evacuation route (see Fire Safety and Evacuation Map posted at Front Desk). All new Villagers are to be informed of this during the orientation process.

c. A Safety Committee shall be formed consisting of at least one SC member, one CHAT volunteer, and two Villagers. Duties of this committee shall include the following:

- o Oversight of fire drills and Food Storage Policy

- o Annual (or at change of occupancy) safety inspection with attention to trip, slip, and fall hazards

- o Annual (or at change of occupancy) testing of all smoke and CO2 detectors

- o Annual (or at change of occupancy) testing of all extension cords and power strips with an approved circuit tester

- o Maintenance of systems and equipment installed to prevent or control fires

- o Maintenance and control of fuel hazard sources

d. In addition, participant members of the Safety Committee shall be prepared to:

- o Assist others and provide medical aid in an emergency.

- o Take a head count after an evacuation. Identify the names and last known locations of anyone not accounted for and provide them to the Fire Official in charge.

- o Provide additional information or explanation of duties under the plan to Villagers and volunteers.

e. The following fire fighting and fire protection measures will be taken:

- o No recreational fires will be permitted within the Village as prohibited by City Code.
- o No open flames are permitted within the housing units.
- o ABC fire extinguishers will be accessible throughout the Village (see Fire Safety and Evacuation Map for locations).
- o Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms will be installed in common buildings and dwellings per City Code, and will be inspected to insure they are functional and replaced if they are not functional.
- o A map of the village emergency vehicle ingress and egress will be maintained and provided to the Chico Fire Department.
- f. There will be lockable gates at the Village, and the fire lane will be defined and kept clear of obstructions within the Village.
- o A minimum 10-foot setback and right-of-way will be maintained between structures on the Village site.
- g. Villagers will participate in at least two fire drills per year with the Chico Fire Marshal's Office present, using the following procedure:
  - o Appoint someone to monitor the drill, activate and reset the fire alarm, and time the evacuation.
  - o Fire drills shall be conducted at varying times and under varying conditions to simulate conditions that could occur during a fire or other emergency. Make it realistic by requiring participants to use their second way out or to crawl low. This can be done by having someone hold up a sign reading "smoke" or "exit blocked by fire".
  - o After the evacuation, take a head count at the designated meeting place(s) to account for everyone's participation and safe evacuation.
  - o After the drill, gather everyone together to discuss questions or problems that occurred. Redesign the drill procedures as needed.
- h. The fire drills will be documented and recorded in the Village Operations Records with the following details:
  - o Identify the person conducting the drill
  - o Date and time of the drill
  - o Notification method used
  - o Staff members on duty and participating
  - o Number of Villagers evacuated
  - o Special conditions simulated
  - o Problems encountered
  - o Weather conditions during the drill
  - o Time required completing the evacuation
- i Fire Safety and Evacuation Map posted at front desk.
- j. Inspections of dwellings may occur with a 24 hour notice from the Steering Committee or immediately in cases of obvious eminent danger.

## **FOOD STORAGE POLICY**

Fair sharing of resources is critical to the well-being of the Village. Hoarding or inequitable division of resources is unhealthy. Additionally, the Village is vulnerable to food theft by dogs, cats, rodents and other animals. Rodents themselves provide a health hazard and we must discourage their presence by not having food available to attract them. Consequently, the following Food Storage Policies have been adopted:

- a) All community food that enters the Village as a donation must be stored in the community food pantry in an appropriate sealed container. No donated food may be taken to an individual residence. All community food must be eaten in community areas. This is not only for sanitation purposes but also to promote the social health of the Village.
- b) Non-perishable food purchased by a Villager with their own resources may be stored in rodent and insect resistant containers in their residence.
- c) A limited amount of perishable food may be stored in the community refrigerator, if it is labeled with a name and date. Items in the refrigerator without a label immediately belong to "everyone." No perishable food may be stored in an individual residence.
- d) All food will be prepared in communal spaces.
- e) It is important, if one eats in their residence, to immediately wipe or sweep up any crumbs for the prevention of rodent infestation.
- f) Any villager who fails to store food properly in their unit may be ruled no longer able to have food in their unit by the Village Council.
- g) Villagers may not take food from the community food area or any common food source to their residence to eat, unless approved special circumstances.

## **PET POLICY**

Service Animals and pets are honored as an important part of Villagers' lives. The limited capacity of the Village to support only a small number of such animals is also honored. Consequently, the following Pet Policies have been adopted:

- a) Service Animals are welcome. A doctor's prescription for a service dog must be shown. If someone with a service dog does not have a prescription, they may seek assistance in locating a doctor to assess the need and prescribe a service animal. A Service Animal does not count in the "quota" of dogs. Service Animals must follow the same rules as other dogs. However, if someone has a Service Animal, but cannot obtain a prescription, that animal will be considered a pet and must be counted in the quota on a first-come first-served basis as outlined below.
- b) Dogs are permitted as pets. There will be a maximum of 9 dogs at SV at any one time. Space for dogs is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- c) All pets must be tagged with ID as required by local regulations.
- d) No pets may be acquired AFTER acceptance into SV.
- e) All dogs must be spayed and neutered prior to moving on-site. Applicants may seek help from the Council in finding funds/veterinarian for such procedures.
- f) All dogs must be on leash at all times. If, at any time, Village Monitors find that a pet either poses a nuisance or danger to others or is not properly cared for, the pet must leave

SV at the instruction of the Village Council. Residents may ask the Council for assistance in the proper training of their pet.

g) If the participant dog owner is off site, their dog must be properly confined in the kennel area or in a secure dog run and/or under the supervision of another Villager.

h) The owner must pick up all solid waste for their pet, keep their pet from annoying other residents either through trespass, barking or any other means. Failure to do so can result in the Village Monitors ejecting the pet from the premises.

### **ABANDONMENT POLICY**

Villagers who have been continuously absent from the Village and have made no effort to remain in contact for a period of 3 days (or extensions for good cause) have abandoned their dwelling. Said persons would no longer be a Villager or participant and their possessions would be removed from their previous dwelling immediately upon the dwelling being declared abandoned. They would then have a period of 30 days to retrieve their possessions after which time those items would be disposed of at the discretion of the Council.

A structure will also be considered abandoned if a Villager is spending less than 10 out of 14 nights at the village. Exceptions will be made for Villagers who are unable to contact the Village due to extenuating circumstances such as; jail, hospital, etc. Abandonment will not be considered for those Villagers who wish to spend time away from the Village for personal reasons provided they inform a Council member and make arrangements to cover their host hours when possible. In the case of emergencies exceptions will be made for those unable to make arrangements to cover their host hours.

#### **Process for documentation and storage of abandoned possessions:**

When a unit has been declared abandoned, at least 2 Village Monitors will remove items from the abandoned unit. They will document what items are present and place them in an available storage container or bag that is clearly labeled with the name of the former Villager and the date of the abandonment. These items will then be stored in the storage loft of the Front Desk until such time as the owner retrieves them or they are over the 30-day limit. Once items have reached the 30-day limit, Village Monitors will determine the proper disposal of said items during the next Council meeting.

### **ALCOHOL, DRUG, & PARAPHERNALIA POLICY**

a) Consumption of alcohol at SV: 48 hour expulsion (enrollment in an AA program or random breathalyzer testing may also be required if Village Monitors or SC deem necessary).

b) Consumption of marijuana without a prescription at SV: 48 hour expulsion.

c) Illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia, including needles (if no prescription for insulin or other IV medications), pipes (used for anything other than tobacco or medical marijuana), and spoons that have been used for "cooking" drugs: permanent expulsion.

d) Any other items suspected to have been used for drug related purposes will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Village Council and/or Monitors.

e) No smoking or vaping permitted in any buildings or dwellings on the Village premises.

## **COUPLES POLICY**

Couples must agree to abide by the following intervention policy if they have a fallout which results in one person moving out of a couple's unit. This must be filled out during the interview process.

"We, \_\_\_\_\_[the couple's names]\_\_\_\_\_, in the event of a fallout resulting in an inability to live together and causing one person to move out of couple housing, will agree to Village policy that \_\_\_\_\_[one of their names]\_\_\_\_\_ will move out of the couple's unit and out of SV until a single's unit is available." In order to remain an active Villager, the person who moved out of the unit will still need to do their gate shifts, bathroom duties, extra hours and attend Village meetings.. In exchange, the Village will do their best to secure the Villager's property in a safe and dry location.

After the Villager moves into a single's unit, when a second single's unit becomes available, the Villager remaining in the couple's house will move into it, thus freeing up the couple's house for a new couple.

## **PROBATIONARY STATUS POLICY**

New participants undergo a 4-week trial period, subject to Steering Committee oversight, to ensure that they are willing to follow the SV Participant Agreement before being fully accepted as a Villager. The goal of this program is to

obtain a fair and objective view of the potential Villager that removes the "popularity contest" factor, and instead focuses on their willingness to be a contributing member of the community.

The new participant will be given a mentor who will guide them through orientation and do a daily check-in with the new participant to answer any questions or concerns that they may have. It will also be the mentor's responsibility to counsel the new participant when any issues arise so that the concerns may be addressed. The mentor will meet with Village Council once a week to advise them on how the new participant is progressing.

After 4 weeks, Council and at least 1 BOD or SC member will hold a meeting where Villagers can express any legitimate concerns, questions, and complaints about the new participant. After the meeting, they will vote on whether to accept the new participant as a Villager based on the following criteria:

- 1) Has the new participant upheld their responsibilities, such as front gate, extra hours around the village and bathroom cleaning duties?
- 2) Does the new participant have any incident reports? If so, can those be interpreted as part of the learning process and will not be a continual issue?

**Volunteer Work While on Wait List:** Potential Villagers who have passed the background check and interview process will be encouraged to volunteer service to the Village to

demonstrate a willingness to contribute and be a part of the community. A list of projects will be made available to help guide potential Villagers. A sign-in sheet will be maintained in order for SC to supervise these projects.

### **MEDICAL & FAMILY LEAVE POLICY**

**Definition of Medical Leave:** Medical leave is time off from Village duties, excluding fee payments, that Villagers can use to address their health and safety needs without losing their Villager status.

**Definition of Family Leave:** Family leave refers to time taken off from Village duties, excluding fee payments, for the purpose of caring for an ill family member or to assist a family member with crisis needs.

**Time allowed for Medical and Family Leave:** A Villager is allowed two weeks of medical leave or family leave with no documentation necessary. If the need is longer than two weeks, documentation may be required to present to Council. If the Villager needs more than 60 days of medical leave or family leave, they will need to vacate their residence in order to allow a new participant to get into the Village. (Housing wait-list current policy will still be followed). The current Villager will then be placed first on the wait list for re-entering the Village when their medical issues are resolved and they are able to be a full Villager once more. If more than one Villager is on the wait-list, they would be in the order that they were placed on wait-list. When on the wait-list, no fees are required to be paid. A person will remain on the wait list for 3 months and would need to reapply if they were not able to become a full Villager once more. Exception to this rule will be if no housing units become available before their 3 months are up. While on medical or family leave, if a Villager is staying on-site, they will be required to pay their fees as normal. If they are not staying on full time at the Village, they are responsible for paying a prorated amount for the time they are there. If the Villager attends the weekly Village meetings, they retain their full voting rights. If they do not attend, they forfeit their voting rights for that meeting.

**How to apply for Medical and Family Leave:** If a Villager needs to take medical or family leave, they will need to advise the Council of their needs as soon as they are able, in order to be granted leave. If a Villager is staying on-site and needs more than 60 days, they will speak to Council and it will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**KITCHEN, BATHROOM AND GROUNDS CLEANING POLICY**All villagers are required to sign up to share in the duty of cleaning the Village kitchens, bathrooms, shower and laundry areas and grounds.

1. First refusal to sign up or to adequately complete this requirement will result in a verbal warning and Villager will be required to sign up for two spots the following rotation.
2. Failure to sign up for the 2 days in the following rotation or adequately complete the cleaning

duty will result in a written warning for the first violation and a 48 hour expulsion for the second violation. The Villager will again be required to sign up for an additional 2 days on the following Rotation.

3. Failure to sign up or adequately complete the cleaning duty a third time would then result in a permanent expulsion.