Amate House Fellow Handbook 2026-2027

The purpose of this document is to inform fellows and prospective fellows about our program's values, charism, and policies. Our hope is that all Amate House fellows will enter into their year of service with a willingness to grow, share, and serve. The contents of this handbook are meant to provide some "best practices" for the service experience. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about any of the information included in this document.

- Amate House staff

Table of Contents

Who We Are (p. 2)

History of Amate House | Amate House Mission Statement | Amate House Tenets | Our Catholic Identity

Leadership Development (p. 2)

Social Change Model | Catholic Social Teaching | Spiritual Companions | Professional Development

Intentionality and Simplicity (p. 3)

Alcohol and Substances | Smart Phones | Internet and Online Presence

Community Living (p. 4)

Respect and Confidentiality | Meals | Community Events | Weekends and Free Time | Chores | Budget | Shopping | Environment | Conservation | Hospitality | Guests | Neighbors | Relationships

Service (p. 8)

Professionalism in the Workplace | Site Mediation and Termination | Outside Employment

Self-Care and Support Systems (p. 9)

Self-Care Plan | Mental Health and Counseling Services

Conduct and Disciplinary Guidelines (p. 9)

Grievance Policies (p. 10)

Mediation and Termination (p. 10)

Mediation and Termination Steps | Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Benefits (p. 11)

Allowance | Health Insurance | Dental Care | Loan Forbearance | AmeriCorps | Vacation and Sick Time

Transportation (p. 13)

Automobiles | Automobile Accidents and Tickets | Personal Cars | CTA Passes

Fundraising (p. 14)

Recruiting (p. 14)

Safety and Security (p. 14)

Emergency Procedures | Keys | COVID-19

Last Updated: February/ 25/ 2025

Who We Are

Amate House was established in 1984 as a service program for young adults by three seminarians from the Archdiocese of Chicago, along with a host of other lay and religious Individuals. The founders chose the name "Amate," the Latin imperative "to love," because they envisioned a program in which young adults would put "love into action" by providing service and outreach in response to the needs of the city and the Archdiocese of Chicago. In addition to exploring and living out a vocation of service, Amate House places a special emphasis upon the personal, professional, and spiritual development of its fellows, encouraging their growth into compassionate leaders and advocates for the church and world. The Amate House mission statement reads:

> *To develop young adult leaders into life-long social justice advocates who serve their communities while deepening their faith.*

Amate House fellows are called to live out the philosophy of this mission statement throughout their year of service and beyond. To aid in this endeavor, our program highlights five tenets that we believe are central to our mission: **Service**, **Community**, **Faith**, **Social Justice**, and **Stewardship**.

OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Since our program's inception, we have identified ourselves as a Catholic program. We draw on the Catholic faith's rich tradition of prayer, liturgy, theological reflection, and Catholic Social Teaching as a basis for our formation. In short, our Catholic faith is what grounds us. It informs our understanding of community, service, and justice. While our fellows participate in Catholic traditions, we also seek a variety of perspectives to enrich our conversations. We invite fellows of all faith traditions to be part of the Amate House family, and we celebrate that diversity. Our expectation is that all fellows be open to sharing their spirituality, regardless of their religious affiliation, and that they be respectful of Amate House's Catholic tradition and the views of others.

Leadership Development

"Personal transformation can and does have global effects. As we go, so goes the world, for the world is us. The revolution that will save the world is ultimately a personal one." - Marianne Williamson

One of the unique and primary strengths of our program is the consistent attention given to the personal formation and leadership development of our fellows. We believe that the greatest impact of our program is the growth that takes place in and through our participants during their time with Amate House. Through serving the community our fellows perform meaningful and significant work. Our intention is to form people who are dedicated to making service and the pursuit of a more just and loving society a lifelong commitment.

We acknowledge that "transformation" cannot be forced on anyone – it's ultimately up to the individual's maturity, openness, self-awareness, and God's grace. In response, the Amate House experience is saturated with opportunities for formation – community nights, personal and communal prayer, retreats, in-services, speakers, and presentations. Our aim is to prepare the ground so that grace might enter and enable the seeds that are planted to grow and bear lasting fruit.

FORMATION

Personal formation is an integral component of the Amate House experience. Our fellows engage in reflection, discussion, and activity on a weekly basis throughout the year in a variety of ways:

- **Orientation** provides the framework for the service year. We spend the first two weeks of the year getting familiar with the program, the city, laying the groundwork for community living, and discussing expectations, hopes, concerns, and goals.
- **Community nights** occur each Wednesday night – we typically gather for a meal and activity. The program staff prepares a variety of community nights, covering diverse topics like community dynamics, privilege, discernment, and racial justice. Throughout the year, we bring in engaging speakers from around the city to dialogue with our fellows. Fellows also help to plan several community nights throughout the year.
- **Retreats** provide a welcome respite from the busy schedule. We take two weekend retreats (fall and winter) and one week-long closing retreat at the end of the year. Past retreat themes have included "Love in Action," "Rest as Sacred, Rest as Resistance," and "Be Still and Know that I Am God."
- **In-service days** are special days in the fall, winter, and spring in which our fellows take a day away from work to learn, reflect, or build community as a group.
- **Spirituality nights** are organized and led bi-weekly by the fellows themselves. We encourage our fellows to integrate their spirituality with the everyday happenings of their lives. Fellows take turns with their housemates in preparing a reflection, discussion, or faith sharing activity for the evening.

REFLECTION
Amate House fellows are presented with various journal questions and reflections throughout the year. These are designed to help the fellows seek deeper meanings in their experiences. Our experience has been that taking time for reflection or processing facilitates better learning, integration, and growth. Journaling time is built into our orientation, retreats, and community nights. Amate House program staff also plan one-on-one conversations with each fellow in the fall, winter, and spring, and make themselves available for processing and reflection during weekly office hours.

SPIRITUAL COMPANIONS
Each fellow is offered the opportunity to be partnered with a spiritual companion for the year. The spiritual companion and fellow meet once a month, processing and reflecting on the fellow's experiences, struggles, and any important decisions or life choices the fellow may be discerning. The spiritual companion helps provide support, encouragement, and accountability for their spiritual journey. The fellow is responsible for initiating contact with their companion. Past fellows who have regularly utilized this support have found it immensely helpful to them.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
A year with Amate House is most certainly not a "year off!" Our service sites provide challenging, rewarding work experiences that translate to valuable professional development opportunities. Fellows are typically viewed as full-time employees at the organizations they serve. We emphasize the importance of good communication between fellow and site supervisor, and our staff conducts semi-annual site visits to ensure positive work experiences. For many of our fellows, their service at Amate House is their first foray into a full-time professional work environment, and they are often surprised by the many transferable skills they gain through their work. Furthermore, our alumni often share how their Amate House service placement gave them direction for their future career path. Amate House also offers a professional mentor program, to build relationships with professionals in a fellow's chosen field or explore entirely new vocation options.

Intentionality and Simplicity

"We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking." - Richard Rohr, OFM

Participating in the Amate House program requires openness to change, receptiveness to inner growth, and a willingness to serve others and make sacrifices as an individual and as a community. This commitment to "living intentionally" means cultivating a deeper consciousness about everyday decisions and habits and, at times, may call us away from the prevailing habits of our culture.

In solidarity with the people of Chicago whom we serve, Amate House fellows live out principles of solidarity and stewardship. Each year the communities will set guidelines and goals for themselves as to how this can best be achieved. We challenge fellows to live within the means of their monthly $300 allowance, including those fellows with access to outside financial support. This is intended to be a practice of discipline and solidarity, not to be a simulation or glorification of poverty. We ask that fellows be very cautious about any debt or any other personal financial obligations they enter into before, during, and after they arrive at Amate House. Amate House recognizes fellows come from a variety of backgrounds with varying levels of financial support from their families. Equity is not equality; therefore if a fellow is experiencing a hardship or financial situation that is making their participation in Amate House challenging, we invite them to discuss this with program staff so we can explore available resources if appropriate.

In order to visit family and friends, many fellows fly home, and we are aware that travel can be costly. If a fellow's family offers money in the form of a flight, we ask that they be conscious that other members in their community may not have such luxuries available, so these expenses should be viewed and treated as a gift. In the same way, we ask fellows to be mindful of care packages that may come from family and friends. This deeper level of awareness is needed when encouraging a community of solidarity and equality.

Our experience has taught us that there are some particular areas that warrant some additional consideration:

ALCOHOL and other SUBSTANCES
The habitual use of alcohol and marijuana is discouraged. Communities are encouraged to find a positive alternative when socializing with each other. Frequent use of alcohol or marijuana can compromise a fellow's ability to form authentic, close bonds with others in community. Amate House does not provide or allow any alcohol or marijuana products during orientation, on our three retreats (fall, winter, and closing), during in-service days, or at community nights, including during dinner.

Many of our fellows work at sites whose clients' lives have been impacted by substance use disorders. In addition, there may be community members that are in recovery for a substance use disorder, struggling with substance use, or have family members who

have struggled with it. Amate strives to be an inclusive environment for fellows of all backgrounds by encouraging community members to consider the impact of their substance use on the lives of other fellows.

Amate House residences are smoke free environments, including tobacco, marijuana, and any e-cigarette or vaping device. If fellows or guests do smoke, they must do so outside away from any entrances, and dispose of all cigarette butts. Amate House urges all fellows to use mature judgment and social responsibility when making decisions about using alcohol or other legal substances. Moderation in all things is encouraged. Fellows must also follow the policies for employees at their service site surrounding drug use.

In the event that a fellow is actively misusing substances, Amate House staff may recommend the fellow for additional mental health support. Amate House also recognizes that substance use disorders can oftentimes be criminalized in our society and aims to help fellows address the precipitating factors to substance misuse if they are actively struggling. For this reason, referrals to mental health organizations are made based on the understanding that active misuse of alcohol or other substances often results from a comorbidity with another mental health condition. If Amate House staff or community members are concerned about another fellow's substance use, this concern will be addressed confidentially and communicated respectfully and directly. The fellow will be given one week to respond directly to the issue with assistance and support from the staff. It is our policy that staff may require fellows to seek counseling for the health of the individual and the community. In the event that a fellow refuses counseling services for substance use related issues, they will be asked to meet with the program director and executive director to discuss next steps. However, if a fellow's misuse of substances results in an inability to perform work-related activities, failure to participate in community living, or harm to other members of the community, the fellow may be dismissed from the program prior to referral to mental health organizations.

Alcohol shall in no instance be given to any underage minor on Amate House property, nor shall any misuse of alcohol by anyone be permitted at Amate House. Violating this rule will cause dismissal. Purchasing and the use of kegs on Amate House property is prohibited. Alcohol may NOT be purchased with Amate House community funds. The use of illegal drugs by Amate House fellows or on the grounds of any Amate House property is strictly prohibited. Violation of this expectation will result in dismissal from the program and possible action by legal authorities.

SMART PHONES

Our culture's addiction to technology may be no more apparent than with smart phone usage. There is an inferred expectation that everyone be available at all times, instantly able to respond to calls, text messages, social media outlets, and so on. Because Amate House is designed to be an immersion into intentionality and simplicity, we ask our fellows to reconsider the role their smart phones play in their daily lives. First, having a smart phone is a privilege and should be treated as such. Fellows should be mindful of the usage of their phone (including texting and data) in the evenings and on the weekends during free time, as time on the phone takes away from time in community. Cell phones should be put away during community nights, community meals, retreats, and other Amate House events.

INTERNET AND ONLINE PRESENCE

The house is equipped with wireless internet. Amate House provides internet access so remote work is possible and to help fellows communicate with friends and loved ones. Communities will have an intentional conversation about the use of devices such as phones and laptops, and how it can affect community living during orientation. Additionally, those who elect to bring a laptop, tablet, tv, or gaming system are asked to be mindful about how they use this resource. All these devices can keep fellows from being fully present in community if not used intentionally. Fellows who bring a TV or gaming system will be asked keep it in a common space instead of their bedrooms so it is not a hinderance to community.

Community Living

Almost without fail, when all is said and done, Amate House fellows point to their shared life together in community as one of the most influential aspects of their year. We believe communal living not only provides an important means of support for our fellows during challenging experiences of service, but that it also is an essential part of their ongoing formation as people of faith and continued development as leaders. Thus, it is expected that Amate House fellows make a sincere effort to develop and work at their relationships with community members and staff, to relate with honesty and sensitivity with others, and to do what is necessary for the household and the program to function effectively and lovingly during the course of the year.

RESPECT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The basic ground rule for community living and for involvement in the Amate House program is respect for others. Our Catholic heritage firmly upholds the dignity and sacredness of the human person. This means that all interactions with community members, staff, colleagues, and all others should be rooted in respect.

Our hope is that our communities are sacred spaces where each fellow finds the freedom to be vulnerable enough to share openly and authentically with others. With this in mind, fellows are expected not to discuss confidential information such as personal information shared in confidence, personal information overheard in the process of community meetings and events, or confidential documents or any personal information of other fellows. The only exception to this is if a community member has indicated that they are planning to harm themselves or someone else. In this instance, a staff member should be notified immediately. Fellows should also respect the confidentiality of the students and clients they serve in their community as they would in public.

MEALS

Meals are meant to be daily celebrations in which the community gathers to be nourished with good food, laughter, stories, and sharing. Amate communities eat dinner together Monday through Thursday, with the responsibilities of cooking and dishwashing shared amongst all members. Because mealtime is designed to be a great community building time, fellows are expected not to miss a community dinner unless it is absolutely necessary. After their year is done, most alumni share that many of their happiest memories of the year occurred around the dinner table! Weekend meals are generally left up to individuals, although sharing meals and cooking during this time is highly encouraged.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Fellows attend and participate in weekly community nights, opening and closing liturgies, retreats, in-service days, house meetings, community prayer, spiritual companioning/professional mentor sessions, benefit events, and other special events.

Wednesday community nights are sacred. Fellows must be present at each community night and be on time. All service sites are aware of this commitment and should allow fellows ample time to return home by 4:30 on Wednesdays in order to be present and relaxed for community nights. Fellows are expected to keep in balance their commitment to service at their site and the formation that Amate House provides. Good communication and time management go a long way in keeping this balance.

Any absence from a community night, in-service day, retreat, or other Amate House programming needs to be clearly communicated with the fellow's program director and approved well in advance of the event. Fellows should speak with their program director as soon as they have a scheduling conflict, with no less than a week's notice for a community night and one month's notice for a retreat or in-service day.

Approved absences are generally limited to illness, funerals and bereavement, or events where a fellow has no control over scheduling, such as graduate school interviews or a mandatory work commitment. We uphold this policy consistently because community nights are a core part of the Amate House experience, and it would be unfair to grant exceptions to some fellows and not others.

Generally, weekends remain free from Amate House commitments. However, there ARE some events planned during the year that take place on weekends. If someone plans to leave community for a weekend, they are expected to consult their house's calendar before making plans to be away. Fellows should plan their travel around Amate House and service site commitments. Amate House makes a conscious effort to alert fellows of commitments that take place on weekends – the program will provide a list of required events during orientation, and these commitments will also be listed on the house calendar. If a scheduling conflict comes up, we ask that the fellow contact their program director ***before*** making plans to miss an Amate House commitment.

WEEKENDS and FREE TIME

Each community member's presence (or absence) on weekends has a significant impact on communal life. In order for relationships to develop, time and space is necessary. **Amate House asks its fellows to not leave Chicago or their community on a weekend during the month of August.** This encourages communities to intentionally spend weekend time together at the beginning of the year so they can focus on individual relationships within the community. Throughout the year, we encourage fellows to show an ongoing commitment to community by limiting their time away.

Outside projects such as graduate school exams, applications, and interviews can compromise a fellow's full presence in community. If a fellow is applying to graduate school, we ask them to be aware of how much time these projects will take from community, and to effectively communicate this with their housemates. When possible, we ask them to schedule any tests and complete applications before they begin their Amate House commitment.

When fellows leave for the weekend, the general expectation is that they leave after our Wednesday community night together. **This includes Christmas and Easter vacation time.** Upon leaving for the weekend or going out with other friends, fellows should always let their community know where they are going, when they expect to return and how they can be reached, both for their own safety and out of respect for those with whom they are living.

CHORES

Tasks for maintaining the house in clean and good working order will be determined by the community during orientation. We find it helpful to discuss this early, as working out house chores and jobs in a large community can be quite difficult! Participation by each person in the ongoing cleaning and maintenance of our home is an essential dimension of a commitment to intentional community living. It is a way to actively practice hospitality and it helps us to maintain our residences for future Amate House fellows.

Amate House residences are expected to be cleaned and picked up on a weekly basis, especially if a house is hosting a community night, college immersion group or any other Amate House event. Communities are encouraged to discuss methods of accountability when determining who will be responsible for what chores.

BUDGET

Each fellow will be provided with a $300 allowance check on the 15th of each month, starting on August 15 of their program year. This check is their individual allowance money for the month—and is theirs to spend as they wish. Fellows are strongly encouraged to cultivate a mindful and resourceful use of their funds throughout the year.

The house treasurer is issued a check for the communal grocery budget on the 1st of the month. The house treasurer is responsible for managing the grocery budget for the house. The house will receive a grocery budget of $200 per person for each month. Funds from the communal grocery budget are not to be spent on alcohol.

The transportation coordinator for the house is issued a check each month for the community's fuel allotment. Included in this check is money allocated to cover each fellow's commute to/from work, funds to cover mileage to/from community nights, plus any additional funds needed to cover commutes to/from any Amate related events, church, and grocery shopping. Fellows will pay for their own mileage for personal transportation outside of work and Amate House related events. The transportation coordinator is responsible for managing the fuel budget for the community. A more detailed job description for the house treasurer and transportation coordinator will be reviewed at orientation.

SHOPPING

Grocery shopping should be completed in accordance with a commitment to good stewardship of resources, the health of the community, and within budget! Fellows are encouraged to shop for their food thoughtfully, cost-effectively, and with consideration to their housemates' dietary needs (i.e. vegetarian, vegan, allergies, etc.) Everyone in the community has a say in this issue, so we encourage the house to have a fair and inclusive conversation. It is a wonderful exercise in simple living, group decision-making and conscientious purchasing!

Amate House purchases are exempt from sales tax. Each community will receive copies of our tax-exempt letter for use when purchasing groceries and other items with community funds. Fellows will be instructed on proper use of this letter; misuse of the letter could jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the organization, so fellows are expected to use the tax letter prudently and take care not to lose it.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment created within our Amate House homes can have a great impact on mental and physical well-being. Fellows are encouraged to find ways to make their homes (both inside and outside) warm, inspiring and welcoming, to create spaces which promote self-care and to help keep a clean environment which promotes healthy, happy living. **Communities are responsible for the upkeep of the outside of their residence, including raking, mowing, shoveling, weeding, and picking up trash.** Amate House buildings are smoke-free, including any e-cigarette or vaping devices. The courtyard provides an area for smoking. Fellows and guests who smoke are required to clean up all cigarette butts and garbage.

CONSERVATION

Amate House is financially responsible for the utility bills of our residences. We ask that our communities conserve energy (i.e. turn off radios, TV, lights, and fans when leaving a room). As part of our commitment to the principles of stewardship, we take seriously our responsibility to care for creation. Therefore, we encourage our communities to recycle cans, glass, plastic, and paper. We also ask that our fellows learn how to use and maintain the kitchen compost provided.

HOSPITALITY
One of the challenges of community living – and one of the surest signs of a vibrant community – is the capacity to provide hospitality to guests, and make others feel welcome in their home. Because hospitality is something we value at Amate House, our communities frequently host small groups or activities such as spring break trips, applicants interested in our program, donors and supporters, potential site partners and Amate House Board of Directors and Associate Board of Directors meetings. It can be challenging for fellows to balance their own need for space with the desire to be available and hospitable to others. This is, we think, a wonderfully important tension from which to learn. We encourage our communities to fully enter into the opportunities to practice hospitality.

GUESTS
Fellows are welcome to invite friends and family for dinner or as an overnight guest. Guests should use guest rooms during their stay. Fellows should give their housemates advance notice if they are planning to have someone as an overnight guest. While hosting overnight guests is a wonderful way to practice hospitality, it is also important to recognize that frequently hosting guests does impact the dynamics of community. Fellows should discuss what an appropriate length of stay would be for guests. In addition, community events are sacred, and it may not always be appropriate for guests to participate in small group sharing opportunities that are meant to be confidential. Fellows should always ask their program director if it would be appropriate to have a guest join in a community night or Amate House event. As a courtesy, please let staff know about guests who may be staying in the house, especially if they will be sleeping in any of the common spaces or walking around the house during staff hours. In accordance with our COVID-19 policies, Amate House also requires that anyone staying overnight must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

NEIGHBORS
The Amate House residence is located within the McKinley Park neighborhood and is within close proximity of other people. We ask our communities to be considerate of our neighbors at all times. As representatives of Amate House, courteous and responsible behavior is expected of our fellows whether at home or away.

RELATIONSHIPS
Amate House welcomes unmarried adults to participate in our program. Since romantic relationships can sometimes present challenges to the development of an intentional community, we encourage participants to approach community living with openness and flexibility. We ask couples and close friends who apply together to be mindful of balancing their relationships with full participation in the broader community. Each applicant is evaluated individually through the application process and accepted based on their own merits.

It is not unheard of for romantic relationships to form while fellows are at Amate House, either with another fellow or with a person outside of the program. It is unhealthy and detrimental for fellows to keep these relationships a secret from their community or the staff. It is our hope that fellows continually build a solid foundation of love and respect in their Amate House community and that their relationships are respected and celebrated by their peers. Fellows should keep in mind that during their time at Amate House, their primary commitments are to their community and service site. If a situation arises where a romantic relationship is beginning to form with another fellow within the community, we *strongly encourage* the fellows involved to seek out their program director for support in how to move forward in determining what to communicate with the community and the best approach to take with it.

Cohabitation is discouraged in the Amate House residence. When the significant others of Amate fellows come to visit, they should stay in a guest bedroom out of respect for the program and the fellows.

PETS, SERVICE ANIMALS, AND COMPANION ANIMALS
Amate House does not allow pets, service animals, or companion animals living in the residence due to the communal nature of our living environment. Our program is built on intentional community living, where shared spaces and close quarters require consideration for all fellows. Some participants may have allergies, fears, or other concerns that make accommodating animals challenging. Additionally, the structure of our program—including shared responsibilities, busy schedules, and frequent community activities—may not provide an ideal environment for the proper care of an animal. While we recognize the important role that service animals play, we are unable to make the accommodations necessary to support them in our residence.

Service

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve." - Albert Schweitzer

The focus on service at Amate House is our recognition of a call to action: the call of the Gospel to stand with and for others and live out the values of solidarity and human dignity. We seek to support and encourage fellows as they respond to their personal call to participate in God's love through co-creating a more just and loving society. Indeed, thousands of people are impacted annually through the direct service of Amate House fellows. Amate House has over 935 alumni who have given over 1.45 million hours of service to Chicago-area nonprofits, parishes and schools for over 40 years.

PROFESSIONALISM in the WORKPLACE
Amate House site placements are full-time positions. Sites range from corporate-style office buildings to elementary schools, to converted offices for small nonprofits. Regardless of the site, fellows are expected to treat their service work as they would any other full-time employment: respect for time of arrival/departure, consistent presence, properly communicated absences to employer, etc. If a fellow has a conflict in the workplace, they should speak with the site supervisor to try to resolve the problem before coming to Amate House staff for assistance. If a fellow is unsure how to address an issue, their program director can assist in finding appropriate language and methods.

It is critical for fellows to observe high ethical and professional standards when working with clients at their site placements. When working with vulnerable populations, we expect them to pay close attention to respecting and maintaining the confidentiality of all those they serve. All information regarding a fellow's site placement, its employees and clients, must remain confidential. Confidential information must never be released, removed from place of assignment, copied, or in other ways used for any purpose outside the scope of employment.

Failure to adhere to the expectations, policies, and procedures of site placement can result in dismissal from the program.

SITE MEDIATION and TERMINATION
In the event of a serious conflict with the service site, fellows must communicate with their program director and work through a mediation process with their site and site supervisor. The fellow agrees, by signing the program agreement, to take all possible steps that may be deemed necessary in order to negotiate a solution. A mediation process and timeline will be worked out on an individual basis with the fellow, program director, and site supervisor in the event of a conflict.

Each Amate House fellow makes a commitment to voluntarily serve for the year; because of this, not liking the job is not an adequate reason to leave a service site. When a fellow leaves a service site, it results in a budget deficit for both Amate House and the site. Termination from a site is taken very seriously. Reasons to begin a mediation process would include:

- A lack of direct service at the site. Amate House asks that each site provide a job description that includes 80% direct service to clients or students. A few sites may state up front (on their job description) that 80% direct service is not provided. If this is stated in advance, it is not an acceptable reason for a fellow to terminate their commitment to the site.
- The job description provided during the interview is not accurate and has changed drastically from what they committed to.
- A lack of supervision or inadequate supervision from the site supervisor.
- Personal health or safety concerns on behalf of the fellow.
- The fellow is subjected to emotional or physical abuse or workplace harassment.
- If the site is not upholding their agreed-upon expectations as a site partner.

In the event that a fellow leaves their site following the mediation process, Amate House will attempt to find alternative site positions from a limited list of available placements. Amate House cannot guarantee that a replacement site will be provided, as finding suitable sites mid-year can be very difficult.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT
Because service, community life, and other Amate House commitments take up a significant portion of the day/week, **we prohibit any outside employment**. We also prohibit the fellows from taking classes, unless cleared with the program staff in advance. Our fellows commit to practicing simplicity for the year, and earning and saving money can make that challenge more difficult. Fellows who are offered opportunities to work extra hours for pay (i.e. after school tutoring, coaching) are encouraged to work for free or donate any money received to the program or their community. Fellows who come into the year with financial obligations, such as private student loans, should make arrangements to address these debts prior to their arrival. Amate House staff is also available to discuss loan payment options with fellows, including providing a letter to defer federal student loans.

Self-Care and Support Systems

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." - Mahatma Gandhi

We recognize that an average program year with us has the potential to be filled with stressors. As a result, we take an active approach to consistently encouraging our fellows to take advantage of the various support systems available to them and to be proactive with regard to recognizing what they need to remain healthy physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially, and intellectually.

SELF-CARE PLAN
During orientation, we ask each fellow to complete a self-care plan, which asks them to think critically about how they plan to be intentional about staying healthy and whole throughout the duration of the program year. The self-care plan guides the fellow in setting specific self-care goals for the year. Amate House staff reviews the document in August and periodically throughout the course of the program year, providing connection to support systems, resources, and accountability when necessary.

MENTAL HEALTH and COUNSELING SERVICES
Our staff finds that it is critical to talk about the importance of mental health care frequently. We are fully supportive of our fellows seeking out counseling or therapy services, if they consider it appropriate or necessary. Our belief is that counseling is a valuable and transformative form of self-care.

If a fellow recognizes the need for counseling during any point during the program year, we ask them to inform their program director. Our staff is committed to helping fellows gain access to the support they need, whether through health insurance or resources provided by the program. Amate House will subsidize up to $80 a month for counseling services. Fellows are asked to contribute $5 towards the cost of each counseling session. If the fellow misses a scheduled appointment, they are responsible for the no-show fee.

If an Amate House community member is concerned a housemate may be in need of counseling or mental health services, our staff recommends they be in dialogue with that community member before approaching Amate House staff. It is up to each individual to have transparent dialogue about the issue before staff is involved at any level. Our staff holds the expectation that personal and confidential information shared during house meetings and community conversations be respected.

If the Amate House staff recognizes a need for a fellow to receive counseling or mental health services, this concern will be addressed confidentially and communicated respectfully and directly. The fellow will be given one week to respond directly to the issue with assistance and support from the staff. It is our policy that staff may require counseling for the health of the individual and the community. In the event that a fellow refuses counseling services, they will be asked to meet with the program director and executive director to discuss next steps.

MEDICAL LEAVE
If a fellow feels they need a longer absence from the program for health reasons, they should discuss it with their program director. Together, they will determine if medical leave is an appropriate next step. Should a situation arise where a fellow needs to take leave from the program because of physical or mental health reasons, Amate House staff, the fellow, and the fellow's service site will work together to determine the best plan of action. We will address each situation on **a case-by-case** basis to best support the fellow while also taking into consideration the needs of the community and their service site. The well-being of the fellow is our top priority. Prior to the fellow returning from leave, they must provide documentation from the appropriate medical professionals stating they are ready to reenter community life at Amate House. The fellow will also meet with Amate House staff to discuss a plan for ongoing support needed from Amate House and outside of the program for the fellow's success.

Conduct and Disciplinary Guidelines

In the event that corrective measures are recognized as potentially necessary with an individual fellow or community, the Amate House staff retains the discretion to take disciplinary action appropriate to the particular circumstances. Violations of Amate House rules or policies will result in disciplinary measures that may, depending on the circumstances, include counseling, verbal or written warnings, or immediate termination. These disciplinary measures do not constitute an exclusive list or actions that may be taken; they are intended merely as a guide for the fellow. The Amate House staff reserves the right to vary from corrective action procedures and to terminate a program agreement at any time and for any reason.

For the benefit of the fellow, and to protect the efficiency and productivity of Amate House, certain rules must be observed by all fellows. Engaging in any of the following examples of unacceptable conduct may result in any of the disciplinary actions discussed above. These examples are intended as a guide and are not all-inclusive.

- Theft

- Dishonesty
- Harassment
- Discourteous treatment of others
- Violation of Amate House policies on alcohol and other substances
- Failure to maintain confidentiality at Amate House service site or within one's community
- Failure to consistently meet requirements of Amate House service site
- Failure to consistently meet requirements of Amate House program and formation program
- Failure to put forth a reasonable effort to contribute to the common good of one's community
- Failure to put forth a reasonable effort to live by the Amate House tenets
- Failure to be a good representative of the Amate House program and the Archdiocese of Chicago while at service site, in public, or on personal business

Grievance Policies

Any and all grievances or complaints, large or small, related to a fellow's participation in the Amate House program, related to any other participant in the Amate House program, or against a staff or board member, should be handled in the following manner:

1. If any issue or complaint is related directly to an individual person, that person should be approached respectfully, communicated to directly, and allowed the opportunity to respond directly to the issue.
2. If the issue or complaint is not sufficiently resolved through direct communication with the individual, or such communication is deemed to be inappropriate, the fellow should report/discuss the matter with their program director and/or site supervisor. *If the issue is with the program director or other staff member, the next step is to bring the issue to the executive director, instead of any other staff member.*
3. If the issue/complaint is still not sufficiently resolved, the matter should then be communicated with the executive director.
4. After the executive director, if the matter has not been resolved in the previous three steps, the president of the board of directors should be approached.
5. In consultation with the executive director, the board of directors will make final decisions related to any matters not resolved previously.

Mediation and Termination

It is a rare occurrence that a fellow decides to leave Amate House prior to completing the program year. Our program is very proud of our high retention rate from year to year – we attribute this success to a responsive, supportive staff and community environment. Therefore, when a fellow does choose to terminate their commitment, our staff, board of directors, and service sites take it very seriously. We ask that any fellow discerning their commitment to Amate House weigh this decision WITH their program director or the executive director. All discernment will be kept confidential at the request of the fellow.

Our fellows' commitment to Amate House begins when they sign the program agreement upon acceptance to the program. **Any decision to terminate from the program has a major financial impact on Amate House and the service site.** Departing fellows affect our staff, the fellow's site, their clients, their community, and our budget.

In the event that an Amate House fellow decides to terminate from the program, the following steps will be taken:

1. The fellow will be encouraged to give an explanation to their community. This would entail a discussion and reflection led by an Amate House staff member. When a fellow leaves, it has a significant impact on the shared life of a community. Time must be allowed for the community's reflections and questions regarding the situation. The fellow is asked to be open and honest with their community. The community is required to keep any information that is discussed in this setting confidential.
2. The fellow will be encouraged to make personal (face to face) contact with each staff member that they have been involved with in order to end the Amate House experience properly. This includes the executive director and program staff.
3. The fellow is responsible for arranging a meeting to inform their site supervisor of their decision. This should include both an explanation and an apology for not fulfilling the commitment they made to the organization or school. The site supervisor should set the requirements for termination with the staff members at the site. The program director will contact the site regarding the broken contract.
4. The fellow must complete an exit interview with the program director, the executive director, or the board president.

If terminated from the Amate House program, the fellow will be immediately terminated from Amate House's health insurance policy.

These steps are to be completed within the timeline deemed appropriate by the program director; no longer than 5 days.

In the event that Amate House decides to terminate the relationship with a fellow, the program agreement may be terminated after appropriate explanation and notice is given. In such instances, staff will follow the mediation and termination steps listed above. Such a decision is made by consulting the program staff in conjunction with the executive director.

Note: **when the grievance impacts the physical, mental, or emotional safety of a community member(s), dismissal from the program may be warranted and immediately invoked. This is at the discretion of the executive director after discussion with the program staff.**

DIVERSITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Amate House respects and upholds the dignity of all persons regardless of the identities they hold. A part of being an Amate House fellow is discerning your own identities and how you interact with the world. We will continue to expand our conversations and programming around present day injustices and their ties to oppressive histories. We believe that creating a just and diverse environment is more than an ideal, but rather at the core of who we are as an organization. We welcome people of every race, religion, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status and family composition. We celebrate all persons regardless of where they may be on their spiritual journey. We value persons of all faith traditions, those with no faith tradition, as well as those who are questioning and exploring. We work to be a community that follows Catholic Social Teaching, which upholds the life, dignity, and equality of all human beings.

Discrimination will not be tolerated. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful or harassing discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from Amate House.

Amate House will not tolerate harassment of any kind. Harassment includes threatening or insinuating that the refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect workplace or community relationships. Harassment may also include conduct such as unwanted sexual flirtation or touches; abusive or degrading language; graphic or suggestive comments; or displaying inappropriate objects or pictures. Any member who believes that they have been subject to harassment of any kind, or who has knowledge about harassment of others, should report their harassment to an immediate supervisor, and/or program coordinator in accordance with the grievance policy. Any member who is found to have engaged in harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including dismissal from Amate House.

Benefits

ROOM AND BOARD

Amate House provides each fellow with their own room which has a bed, closet. and some additional furniture. The kitchen, free laundry, courtyards, and living space are shared spaces for all housemates. There is a household budget for food, cleaning supplies, and household items. Utilities such as heat, water, electricity, and WIFI, are all included. However, the house does not have central air, some AC units are provided, and fellows are allowed to bring their own AC units to Amate House.

For your financial planning, we want to be clear that the following items are not covered by Amate House benefits:
Cell phones, personal mileage (such as driving for social outings), and transportation to and from Amate House for move in, move out, and breaks.

ALLOWANCE

Fellows receive their $300 monthly personal living allowance checks on the 15th day of each month, beginning in August and ending in May. Fellows are expected to commit personally to the challenge of sticking to their monthly allowance. This means thinking about how they will pay for cell phone bills, personal use of public transportation and bus/plane/train tickets home.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Our fellow health plan is covered by Christian Brothers Services (www.cbservices.org). Health insurance coverage begins **September 1 and continues through June 30** each year and provides limited coverage. During orientation, fellows are enrolled on the Amate House health plan. Until the date of the closing liturgy, Amate House will offer partial reimbursement of doctor visit copayments and prescription costs to all its fellows, including those who elect to stay on their parents' plan for the year. As a Catholic organization, Amate House cannot reimburse for birth-control. The Christian Brothers health insurance provided by Amate House also does not cover birth control. If you have questions or concerns about this, please reach out to program staff. Any ongoing doctor visits should

be discussed with Amate House before the appointment to verify if Amate House will assist with payment. Amate House does not pay for Chiropractic services. New fellows should note that they are in the program a full month before their health insurance coverage begins. This is typical of any other type of employment. We encourage our fellows to ensure that they remain covered throughout the year – if a fellow requires medical attention while uninsured, they will be responsible for any medical costs incurred. Fellows are encouraged to stay on their parent or guardian's health insurance throughout their time at Amate House because CBS coverage is limited.

DENTAL & VISION CARE
The health plan provided by Amate House DOES NOT include dental or vision care. Fellows who require emergency dental services are encouraged to contact their program director, as we have been able to find pro-bono care in the past. Fellows are encouraged to get their routine dental care before they begin the Amate House program.

LOAN FORBEARANCE
Each private lender treats the Amate House experience differently. Fellows with private loans are encouraged to contact their lender prior to arriving at Amate House. Each fellow is responsible for learning about and executing the action steps required for their particular situation. Fellows requiring paperwork from Amate House should contact the program staff who are happy to assist in the process. In the case of federal student loans, Amate House provides a letter of eligibility to enroll in loan deferment.

VACATION and SICK TIME
Each Amate House fellow may take up to 10 days of vacation time during the year. A vacation day is defined as any weekday spent away from community, regardless of whether it is a site holiday. This time should be worked out around site, community and other Amate House commitments. Fellows should clearly communicate planned vacation times with fellow community members, site supervisors and Amate House staff.

Fellows are expected to take no more than the two allotted weeks (10 workdays) of vacation during their service year. This is especially important for teachers and those working in schools, as these placements often have set breaks and may end earlier than the official program year. Fellows in these roles must ensure they take no more than 10 weekdays away from their community.

Some work sites may allow fellows additional time off beyond Amate House's vacation policy, but this is entirely at the discretion of the site and should not be assumed. Additionally, some sites may allow remote work, which can provide flexibility around time away from the community. However, this option should be used responsibly. Fellows should communicate transparently with both their site supervisor and Amate House staff if they plan to work remotely.

On rare occasions, fellows may need more than 10 days off for medical reasons. In such cases, they should discuss their situation with their program director to determine whether a leave of absence is appropriate. Fellows with extra time available due to their work schedule are encouraged to use it productively and in alignment with their commitment to the program.

Please note that any time away from work and community is vacation time, even if it is for a grad/med/law school or job interview for next year.

Amate House fellows are permitted three sick days during the course of the year. Sick days are only to be used when the fellow is sick. They are not interchangeable with vacation days. Fellows are also allowed two days away from work and community (with permission from the site supervisor) for recruiting purposes. Recruiting trips must be planned ahead of time with the recruitment and communications coordinator.

Transportation

AUTOMOBILES
Amate House has vehicles available for use by fellows. They will be shared and distributed as needed, by the discretion of the program staff. We ask that fellows treat these vehicles with great care, as they provide the main mode of transportation for fellows to and from service sites. **All drivers of Amate House vehicles MUST HAVE A VALID DRIVERS LICENSE and be at least 21 years of age.** Almost all of the Amate House vehicles have been donated, and therefore are "well loved." Safety is a priority, so we work to keep all of our cars in good working order. We ask our fellows to help us with accomplishing this goal by helping to coordinate routine maintenance, such as oil changes, and visits to the repair shop as needed.

Cars are to be used first and foremost for transportation to and from work (this takes priority over any personal use). We ask that Amate House fellows utilize the public transportation systems available to them whenever possible. Fellows from the Chicagoland area and surrounding suburbs should use Metra to visit their families. Amate House cars are not to be taken more than one hour from the house and are not to be driven out of the city unless for Amate House purposes (recruiting or retreats) or otherwise allowed by the program staff. Secondarily, Amate House vehicles are a valuable, shared resource for the community. Everyone is responsible for their care. Carpooling with Amate cars and using CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) are important means of transportation to and from the work site. Communities must work with each other to determine the most equitable and efficient use of vehicles during the year. Everyone is required to assist in transportation of one another to work or to public transportation if need be.

Amate House will reimburse mileage for travel to and from church services. Mileage for trips to a gym will also be covered, but only if the gym is within a two-mile radius.

For liability reasons, Amate House cars are not to be used for transporting clients or students at a fellow's site. If a fellow uses an Amate House vehicle for work purposes, the site must reimburse Amate House at the current federal mileage rate, per their agreement with our organization. The fellow is responsible for reporting this mileage to Amate House staff.

Each Amate House community will designate a member who will be the contact person in the house regarding repairs, oil changes, etc. This is considered a community role and will be discussed further at orientation.

AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS and TICKETS
If an Amate House car is involved in an accident, **a police report MUST be filed for insurance purposes.** Fellows involved in an accident should call the police IMMEDIATELY to file a report. (Dial 311 for non-emergencies.) Immediately after that, a staff member should be notified.

Our insurance deductible for accidents and necessary repairs related to accidents is $500 per incident. Fellows involved in an accident with an Amate House vehicle for which they are at fault will be asked to contribute $100 (for each accident) towards the deductible. This fee is charged in order to ensure responsible and careful driving with Amate House cars. Fellows who are at fault in multiple automobile accidents may have their Amate vehicle driving privileges revoked. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the staff.

Fellows will be expected to pay for any automobile tickets (parking, speeding, running a red light or any other moving violation) for which they are responsible. Your program director should be notified if an Amate House vehicle is ticketed. As the registered owners of the cars, Amate House receives a copy of every ticket written out to one of our vehicles in the mail.

PERSONAL CARS
All Amate House fellows have committed to live a more simplified lifestyle while in Chicago. We challenge our fellows to live without multiple vehicles at their disposal. Therefore, we ask that fellows not bring personal vehicles unless there is a compelling medical or personal reason.

CTA PASSES
Amate House Ventra cards are limited in number and are to be used first and foremost for transportation to and from work by fellows - this takes priority over any personal use. For weeknights and weekends, Ventra cards are a valuable shared resource for the entire community. Because they are community property, everyone is entitled to their use and responsible for their care. Ventra cards are to be reserved and signed out to ensure equitable access to the cards, as well as to provide accountability to their use. Amate Ventra cards are to be used by current fellows only. Those who misplace Amate Ventra passes will be expected to reimburse the program for any subsequent replacement charges ($5). Fellows should plan to purchase their own personal Ventra card, as they will not always have access to a shared community card.

Fundraising

While fellows are not asked to raise a specific amount of money in order to participate in the program, we do expect that they help with our fundraising efforts during the year. Fellows write two letters: fall/Thanksgiving and spring/Easter appeal letters to friends and family, and attend our fall and spring fundraising events, where they help in selling raffle tickets and greeting guests. Fellows may also be asked to speak at parishes or other fundraisers on behalf of Amate House.

Recruiting

Throughout your year of service with Amate House, there will be times where you will be asked to assist in recruitment efforts. Sharing your fellow experience is such a vital part of getting others involved with Amate House. Events you may be asked to participate in include virtual fairs, In-person fairs (when we are able), contacting prospective candidates from your alma mater, being available for phone calls (or zoom calls), emailing prospective candidates, contacting schools to share who we are and what we do, giving input on marketing materials, and participating or leading our information sessions. Since you are living the experience your help and involvement is imperative to recruiting success.

Safety and Security

Amate House takes safety very seriously. We make sure that our residences are safe, secure, and well-lit. We coordinate the safe travel of our fellows to and from their worksites. Our fellows work almost exclusively during daytime hours. We work closely with our sites to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all of our fellows. Our staff is local and can respond to incidents very quickly, if they occur. As a member of intentional community, living closely with other peers also provides an added degree of safety and accountability.

Because we are committed to serving the neighborhoods, schools, and organizations that are most in need, our fellows often work in areas with histories of socio-economic and societal problems. Rather than gloss this over, we talk about it during the application process and throughout orientation. Fellows do need to have an ability and willingness to operate in the urban landscape, understanding that some places in the city might be outside of their comfort zone. Throughout the year, we stress the importance of being aware of oneself and one's surroundings. We have found that being mindful about safety and applying good common sense go a long way towards a successful and safe experience. Our program boasts an excellent track record in regards to safety, especially given our location in a major urban center like Chicago. We recognize that living in a big city like Chicago can be a big adjustment for our fellows. Each community should respect their housemates' feelings about safety. Each community should make sure that housemates and guests are walked out to their cars or picked up from the nearest CTA station if need be. Fellows should not walk outside alone at night.

Doors are to be kept locked at all times. Fellows should make a habit of regularly checking that doors are locked at night and ground floor windows are properly closed. If all fellows are planning to be away from the house for a period of time (i.e. retreat, Christmas) special attention should be paid to making sure the house is secured – newspapers should be stopped, windows should be locked, and a light left on. Cars should be locked at all times. No valuables should ever be left unattended in any vehicle.

Firearms and other deadly weapons are prohibited at all times in Amate House residences and at Amate House events.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

For police or fire emergencies, call 911; for other non-emergencies dial 311.
Instructions and staff phone numbers will be posted in each Volunteer house.

If there is an emergency situation involving a member or members of the community:

1. Call 911.
2. Call a staff member.
3. The staff member will contact the emergency contacts of the fellow.

If there is an emergency situation involving the house (i.e. fire or burglary):

1. Get out! Go someplace out of harm's way.
2. Call 911.
3. Call a staff member.

If a trauma or emergency situation results, the community involved will process the experience with an Amate House staff member and if deemed necessary, a trained professional. If an individual needs to see a trained professional as a result of trauma, Amate House will assist the fellow in finding treatment.

KEYS

Each fellow is given a house key, and a room key. If they lose their house key during the course of the year, the fellow should contact the office manager and receive a replacement key for $10. Anyone who does not turn in either key at the end of the year will be charged a lost key fee of $10 per key.

If a fellow loses a car key, they will be responsible for the cost of replacing the lost car key.

Fellows may not give copies of the keys to any Amate House residence to anyone who is not a current Amate House Fellow unless directed by a staff member to do so.

COVID-19

Amate House does not require fellows to be vaccinated against COVID-19; however, we strongly recommend that fellows get vaccinated, stay up to date with boosters, and receive an annual flu shot. These practices help maintain a healthy community. Fellows must follow all COVID-19 protocols established by Amate House, which will be updated as needed based on guidance from the CDC and the City of Chicago. Should any other endemic or public health concerns arise during the service year, fellows will be expected to adhere to any additional health and safety measures put in place by Amate House.