



Good Works Timothy House FAQ

Written 2/2026

Q. Is the Timothy House an emergency shelter?

Good Works began providing emergency shelter in 1981 on Elliott Street at the home of Keith and Darlene Wasserman. The Wassermans formed a non-profit and established a board and Good Works became a 501(c) 3 in 1984. That same year, Good Works purchased the house on the west side of Athens now known as The Timothy House. For 33 years, Good Works operated an emergency shelter. In 2015, we stopped providing emergency shelter and developed a two-step process to assist adults and children experiencing homelessness in eight Southeast Ohio counties. In 2026, we are celebrating 45 years of providing shelter and care for well over 16,000 consecutive nights.

Q. Why don’t you provide emergency shelter anymore?

We had a dryer fire at the Timothy House in 2014 and over the course of rebuilding we were forced to slow down. This gave us time to process how things had been going. It also coincided with the opioid epidemic and our decision to stop accepting state funds in the amount of \$64,000 each year (about 1/3 of the budget for the Timothy House). These three things combined to help us see that we needed to stop providing emergency shelter in 2015. The article [“Good Works Timothy House Beyond the Numbers”](#) explains this decision. A link to this article is available on the Timothy House section of our website.

Q. What is the process for shelter?

We have not accepted anyone just “showing up” for shelter since 1982 for safety reasons. Everyone must call us first. Currently, we have a two-step process. First, a potential resident calls us and completes a 15–20-minute telephone interview so that we can get a basic understanding of their situation. Secondly, we schedule a face-to-face meeting (we call a pre-admit) where we ask some more in-depth questions about their situation. We give them the opportunity to see the space and to ask questions of us. Assuming all goes well, we schedule an intake interview as soon as possible.

Q. Who do you provide housing to?

At the Timothy House, we serve individuals and families. We’ve had children as young as a day old and adults as old as 86 years. We have a “special use” permit from Athens City which allows us to serve up to 15 people. We have four bedrooms: a women’s room, a men’s room, and two family rooms. We do have a service area limitation of eight counties: Athens, Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, Vinton, and Washington. We built Sign of HOPE located across the street from the Timothy House over the course of 2019-2023. Sign of HOPE is designed to serve those whom the Timothy House cannot serve, such as those with physical disabilities, those with Emotional Support or Service Animals, and others in unique situations. The application process and service area limitation for Sign of HOPE is similar to the Timothy House, but we do ask for there to be someone we can partner with to work with us as we provide care and accountability for each person staying at Sign of HOPE.

Q. Why are people unhoused in Athens when you’re not full?

This answer is as complicated as people are different. We have an article written by Good Works staff in the Timothy House section of our website called [“Why Do People Experience Homelessness?”](#) In short, from our 45 years of observations, people experience homelessness because of a combination of personal decisions and structural issues. Some people never call us to apply for shelter. Others come but realize they do not like our structure and expectations to stay. Some people may not know about us, while others may have a preconceived notion of what a “homeless shelter” is like. Some people might have been given misinformation about our requirements and others might be choosing not to live under what one former resident recently called “basic house guest rules.” We don’t know why people don’t choose to stay inside. We believe the Timothy House is safe, clean and stable.

Q. Why would you not work with someone?

We work with most individuals who call us from our service area and complete our process. The only things that disqualify a person outright are: (1) current illegal or unprescribed drug use (and unwillingness to be in recovery); and (2) being a registered sex offender (because we house children). For pretty much every other situation we want to meet to talk through it with the individual. Our process for former residents to return can often be slower based on what their previous stay with us was like. To learn more about what our residents can expect and how you can connect people with us, see [“How to Make A Referral”](#) in the Timothy House section of our website.

Q. How long can someone stay with you?

We take into account many factors when deciding someone’s length of stay. We do not have a maximum length, but evaluate if we can keep working with someone based on these four principles: (1) are they being honest with themselves and with us; (2) have they been able to demonstrate that they are doing everything within their power to move on to their next step; (3) are they following the rules of the house; and (4) their unique circumstances. We have some people who have stayed only a few days and some who have stayed with us for many months. *Most* of our residents move out to a stable place, but some leave to stay on a friend’s couch, on the streets, or elsewhere.

Q. Why do residents have to leave the Timothy House during the day?

During the day, we ask residents to leave the house from 10:00am to 5:15pm. We do make exceptions and allow people to stay if they are sick, if the weather is bad, or if they request to stay to work on something specific.

Parents who have children with them are given more flexibility to stay during the day. Our staff wear many different hats. As well as serving as Caregivers for the residents, they conduct daily meetings to review and discuss how the Timothy House is functioning, answer phones with questions from community members, and conduct telephone interviews for those seeking housing. In addition, we schedule face-to-face interviews with those we’ve interacted with on the phone, and maintain regular meetings with current residents to talk about how they are reaching their goals and ensure they’re completing their part to keep the house safe and stable.

Q. Are you covered by HIPAA or other confidentiality law?

We are not governed by HIPAA. We do have a high value of protecting the confidentiality of our residents. The Timothy House staff do not speak about residents or provide information about them to anyone without their written consent. Residents can sign a release of information with certain organizations, agencies or individuals. Then we are able to gain information or simply share that the resident is present at the Timothy House or Sign of HOPE. We stopped participating in HMIS (Homeless Management Information Services) and thus stopped receiving state funds in 2014 because the State of Ohio required Good Works to provide personal data about each resident without their permission.

Q. Why can’t residents do [XYZ thing]?

The Timothy House seeks to be a safe, clean, and stable place for our residents. We do have many rules, but this is so we can give our residents a structure and create some stability. Our rules are not always convenient. This is community living. What works for an individual—even an individual who is staying at someone else’s home—doesn’t necessarily work when you have up to 15 residents living under one roof. We do make occasional exceptions to our rules if a unique circumstance arises. We developed our structure to provide a safe, clean, and stable place for everyone. We do not presume that these rules are perfect—we review them regularly and make adjustments when needed. They have evolved over 45 years.

Q. What happens when someone is asked to move out of the Timothy House?

Some people are asked to leave immediately because they have posed some kind of risk or danger to the residents, volunteers, staff, or facilities of Good Works. In those cases, they are asked to take their things with them immediately and to leave. We rarely involve the police in these matters but, if necessary, we do call them. Most people who we have to ask to leave are given a two-day notice in writing explaining when they have to leave by, and identifying the main reasons (or rules broken) which led us to make that decision. Asking someone to leave is very difficult for us. It is never the decision of only one staff person. At least two staff must be in consultation for us to do this, usually including the Director of Caregiving.

Asking someone to leave is never considered permanent by the staff, and the individual is **always** welcome to reapply. Based on the circumstances of their stay and departure, we may require higher levels of accountability with a former resident, but we explain at the point they reapply what the “route back” looks like.

Q. Who works at the Timothy House or Sign of HOPE?

Good Works has four full-time and four part-time staff at the Timothy House and Sign of HOPE on average. We employ a few part-time staff who stay overnight arriving around 9pm and staying until 8am. Night Shift staff are expected to be attentive to what may be going on in the house and be responsive if an issue arises overnight. When decisions are made regarding residents, our protocol is to err to the side of consultation. We have a staff member who lives at Sign of HOPE. That person has an apartment in the upstairs of the facility and comes over in the evenings to walk the Sign of HOPE residents across the street for the night. In some cases, they walk them back to the Timothy House in the morning.

Q. Are you involved with that shelter on Columbus Road?

Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP) is leading the creation of a shelter in the old Sunset Motel on Columbus Rd. Good Works has not been involved. However, those in charge have asked about how we do things, and we have been consulted by them on a few matters.

Q. Can I bring a meal to the Timothy House?

The community donates food to the Timothy House and most meals are prepared by residents and volunteers. On the weekends, we have a program called “Dinner at Timothy’s” where you can sign up to provide a meal for around 15 people. You are invited to stay and eat with us! You can sign up by contacting us at email@good-works.net.

Q. How can I learn more or get involved?

Please visit our website and/or contact us to arrange a tour! We are always open to giving a tour to those who stop by. It is helpful if you can call ahead to one of the facilities To get involved:

- Consider donating items from our needs list: [good-works.net/ongoing-needs](#)
- Contribute financially: [good-works.net/make-a-donation/](#)
- Participate by volunteering: [good-works.net/volunteer-opportunities](#)

Mailing address: PO Box 4, Athens, OH 45701

[www.good-works.net](#)

[www.goodworksdayinthelife.net](#)

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