



## *ConneQT Information Packet and Application*

*Welcome!*

Thank you for your interest in the ConneQT Host Home Program of Avenues for Youth!

ConneQT is a host home program that provides LGBTQ+ youth ages 16-24 with culturally responsive housing within their community of choice. In ConneQT, youth choose which community member they live with. Youth live with hosts for a week to up to a year, depending on their housing needs. Hosts provide food and housing while Avenues works with the youth on their goals.

ConneQT will succeed only because of the involvement and support from the community. This program and the people behind it have a deep commitment to our communities, our youth and social change – not just through the sharing of resources, but through a transformative and intimate process of sharing our homes and our lives. We are thrilled to invite you into this partnership.

We know from research that youth experiencing homelessness are best supported when they are able to remain in the communities where they are comfortable, have friends, attend school, and go to work. For this reason, the goal of our host home program is to recruit, screen, and provide support to folks who are willing to open their homes to young people ages 16 through 24 in their own communities who are experiencing homelessness or have unstable housing (16 and 17 year olds will be able to participate with authorization of their parents or guardians).

Being a host is a powerful and unique experience, and far from being easy. The commitment you are willing to make in order to be a host volunteer is an intense one, as is that of a youth who is moving into a host home. In turn, it will hopefully prove to be a transformational and empowering experience for all involved.

The ConneQT Host Home Program is committed to keeping you informed, being clear about expectations, being up front and honest about decisions made regarding your application, listening to your concerns and feedback, respecting your input, finding the best match for you and the youth, and providing on – going support and training.

Please read carefully the information included in this packet. There is an application form, eligibility requirements, and questions to ponder before getting started. Once we receive the returned packet from you, we will read your application, start the background checks, and set up time for an initial interview. Two representatives of the programs will screen applicants and do the initial interview.

Again, thank you so much for wanting to be a part of host home. It is only through the generosity, spirit of solidarity and commitment of people like you that we are able to offer safer and affirming homes to youth.

Sincerely,

Ryan Berg

## APPLICATION & TRAINING OVERVIEW

1. Potential host home applicants attend informational meeting
2. Applicants fill out required forms, scan and email them to [conneqt@avenuesforyouth.org](mailto:conneqt@avenuesforyouth.org) or mail them to ConneQT program manager at Avenues for Youth, 1708 Oak Park Avenue N, Minneapolis, MN 55411
3. Avenues performs background checks and sends reference requests
4. Applicants attend 16 hours of training
5. Applicants have home interview with staff and youth
6. Applicants are chosen as hosts
7. Hosts are matched with youth
  - *Youth review host files, including the host letter to youth participants.*
  - *Meeting of youth with potential hosts (with case manager and program manager)*
  - *Release of Liability waivers signed*
  - *Review goals, expectations, etc.*
  - *Youth moves in*
  - *The matching process for short term is truncated and youth may move in the same night as the initial meeting*
8. Host home manager provides support to hosts
9. Hosts attend on – going support training
  - *Monthly support group (hosts and HHP manager, 1 – 2 hours)*
  - *Trainings as part of the support group 3-4 times a year (attending 2 trainings is required)*
10. Youth attend social activities and meet with case manager
  - *Planned for youth, extended family, and friends*

## ELIGIBILITY AND EXPECTATIONS FOR HOSTS

### All applicants must:

1. Have an extra bedroom (providing privacy) for the youth
2. Be at least 25 years old
3. Have lived in the Twin Cities for at least a year
4. Live in the greater Metro area
5. Complete the application form, providing any relevant information
6. Have renter/homeowner's insurance, providing a file copy if requested
7. Provide three references
8. Authorize and pass background checks which include:
  - Public Records (i.e. arrest reports)
  - IntelliCorp Records, Inc.
9. Complete the initial training session (16 hours)
10. Complete a question and answer meeting with the program manager and staff member.

The above criteria need to be successfully completed in order for an applicant to be qualified as a host. Applicants need to demonstrate a strong commitment to work with a youth to build a healthy and trusting relationship, an ability to provide a safe, decent, sanitary, stable and supportive environment and consistently demonstrate skills necessary to meet program objectives.

All applicants must be willing to adhere to all program rules and emergency procedures. They must report any changes in family composition and changes in legal status of any household members to the program manager. If selected, applicants and others in the household must be willing to ask for assistance for difficult situations. Applicants and members of the household must not have sexual contact or any other sexual activity with or around the youth placed in their home.

Participation of applicants may be terminated at any point in the process if the program manager and/or supervisor feels the applicant is unable/not ready to host in this program.

**Host Home Support:**

After approval and once hosting, hosts are provided regular support groups. These meetings will provide the hosts with an opportunity to share their experiences and learn from each other, as well as to learn from outside trainers up to four times a year. Youth involved in the program will receive ongoing support from their case managers. The main support person for the volunteer hosts is the program manager, whereas the main support person for the youth is the youth advocate/case manager. The case manager will work closely with the program manager to ensure that the host home receives the appropriate level of support throughout participation. Participation includes scheduled and unscheduled (if warranted) home visits which will also be a part of the support system provided.

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

### **What are the rules of your home?**

Think about sharing your living space with a youth you don't know very well. Think about the rules and expectations that will be important for that person to know (i.e. no guests after 8 pm). The youth moving in will also have rules of their own (i.e. knock before you enter).

### **What are your expectations of the youth while they live with you?**

ConneQT Host Home Program is an opportunity for the youth to live in a stable environment while they work on self – determined goals (i.e. attending/finishing high school, getting their GED, securing a job, learning a skill or trade, paying rent). The youth and their case manager will develop a plan with clear goals and keep the hosts updated as necessary. What expectations do you have for sharing your home with a youth who has different political or religious ideologies than you? If the youth is school aged, do you have an expectation that they should be attending classes?

### **What is your financial commitment to this youth?**

You will be responsible for providing food for this youth for the duration of their stay. Expect your utility and groceries bills to go up. Aside from food and a safe home, you will not be responsible for other expenses. The case manager and program manager will work with you on setting appropriate boundaries around expenses.

### **Is your living space ready for a young person?**

The youth must have their own room or private space. That room/space should be clean when the youth moves in. Make sure that your smoke alarms work and that you have accessible fire extinguishers. If you have alcohol in the house, it should be kept in a safe place where the youth is less likely to have access to it.

### **Are you open to sharing your home with a LGBTQ youth?**

You would need to get acquainted with LGBTQ youth issues and explore your own feelings about sexual orientation and gender identity and learn to be able to talk about and deal with those issues. Understanding the experiences of others with whom we don't share identity takes work. Identifying as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual does not guarantee an awareness of trans issues. We ask that everyone, regardless of how they identify, do their own individual work around queer, trans and non-binary issues.

### **Have you explored (personally or otherwise) issues such as white privilege and racism?**

The majority of hosts in existing host home programs are white, whereas many of the youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota are people of color. If you are white, it is extremely important that you become more aware of race, racism, and white privilege and the implications of living with that privilege. Talking about this will be part of the training.

### **Are you willing to put in some time to create a nurturing relationship with a youth?**

Developing a trusting relationship with a youth may take some time and hard work. This may require you to be an active participant in that young person's life (i.e. driving him/her places, helping with schoolwork, meeting with case manager).

### **Are you capable of living with a youth who may be working through difficult issues?**

You need to be conscious that the young people who participate in the host home program will come from all sorts of backgrounds and have lived through all sorts of experiences. Some have been abused, some are in

recovery for substance use or disordered eating, and some have never had a healthy adult – youth relationship. These issues will also be discussed during the training.

**HOST VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Name of Applicant (Last, First, MI) \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Identity \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date (MM/DD/ YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Co-Applicant, if any (Last, First, MI) \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Identity \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship of Applicants \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Contact Information:**

**Co-Applicant Contact Information:**

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

eMail \_\_\_\_\_ eMail \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best way and time to contact you? \_\_\_\_\_

In what school district do you reside? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in Minnesota? Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months

Co-Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months

In what other states have you lived in the past 10 years?

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY INFORMATION**

Please list all additional adults (other than applicants) and children in your home.

	Name (Last, First, MI)	Relationship to Applicants	Gender	Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____

**HOUSING INFORMATION:**

Please check all of the following categories that apply to your home.

Owned                       Rented                       Single Family House                       Mobile Home  
 Multi – Unit                       Basement Unit                       Second Floor Unit                       Apartment/Condo

How long have you lived in your current home? \_\_\_\_\_ Years                      \_\_\_\_\_ Months

Do you have homeowner’s or renter’s insurance: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what is the name of your insurance company and your policy number?

Are you able to provide an extra bedroom/private space for a youth? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are you planning to move within the next year? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

How much notice would you need for a youth to move in? \_\_\_\_\_

Between what hours can the Program Manager contact you about a potential move-in? \_\_\_\_\_

All hosts entering the program start with short term (1 day to 3 months). After hosting short term hosts can determine if they’d prefer to stay in short term or host in long term (about a year). We ask that hosts who provide short term be able to host 3-4 youth a year. Do you prefer short or long term? (Check all that apply)

- Long term (average stay is about a year)
- Short term (urgent housing need, from 1 day to 3 months)



**REFERENCES:**

List 2 references who have known you at least 1 year and 1 reference who has known you at least 5 years. If you are applying with another person, your reference should know both of you and how you function as a family. A letter will be sent to them with questions.

	Name (Last, First, MI)	Email	Relationship
1	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____

*The following pages contain questions that are to be answered individually. There are two copies: one for the applicant and one for the co-applicant. If you are applying by yourself, please return the blank co-applicant form together with your completed application. Thank you!*

**APPLICANT**

Are you currently licensed as a foster parent (not a requirement for the ConneQT Host Home Program)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No    If yes, with what county/agency? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a current MN driver's license? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what is your driver's license number? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your car insurance company? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you bilingual or multilingual? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what languages do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

To the extent that you are comfortable doing so, please describe how you self – identify (i.e. gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you characterize your comfort level with people of any race, ethnicity, or social class?  
(Please circle a number below; 1 = not comfortable at all; 5 =completely comfortable)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How easy is it for you to talk about issues of race, ethnicity, and social class and privilege?

(1 = not easy at all; 5 = extremely easy)

1 2 3 4 5

How would you characterize your comfort level with your sexual orientation and gender identity?  
(1 = not comfortable at all; 5 = completely comfortable)

1 2 3 4 5

How easy is it for you to talk about sexual orientation and gender identity issues?  
(1 = not easy at all; 5 = extremely easy)

1 2 3 4 5

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Please provide your employment history for the past 5 years, starting with your most current job.

1. Occupation	_____
Place of employment	_____
City, State	_____
Phone Number	_____
Period Employed	_____
2. Occupation	_____
Place of employment	_____
City, State	_____
Phone Number	_____
Period Employed	_____
3. Occupation	_____
Place of employment	_____
City, State	_____
Phone Number	_____
Period Employed	_____
4. Occupation	_____
Place of employment	_____
City, State	_____
Phone Number	_____
Period Employed	_____

If you are not currently working, what is your source of income? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Have you ever been arrested by any law enforcement officer? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been charged with any offense even if dismissed? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Have you ever been convicted of any offense? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of an offense against a youth/minor? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Have you ever abused, neglected, or molested any child? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you checked yes to any of the above, please explain the circumstances and dates:

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Do you smoke? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No      If yes, do you smoke in your home? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do you drink alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do you have concerns about your drinking? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please explain why you are concerned:

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Have you ever used illegal drugs? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, do you currently use illegal drugs? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Please answer the following questions. You may use the back of the page if you need more space.**

1 Please write a little bit about why you are interested in hosting a young person in your home:

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2 Please describe the age, gender, and other characteristics of a young person you would wish to host:

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3 Please describe the characteristics of a young person you would not wish to host:

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4 Please write about your strengths, skills and any other relevant information that you would like to share:

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5 Please describe all physical and/or mental health problems or concerns in your family that could affect someone living in your home:

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**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the facts contained in my application to the ConneQT Host Home Program are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

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Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**→ Don't forget to fill out and sign the Authorization for criminal and civil record checks, complete your Letter to Youth Participants, and return them along with this application to:**

**Avenues for Youth  
c/o ConneQT Host Home Program  
1708 Oak Park Avenue North  
Minneapolis, MN 55411**

***Thank you!!!***

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What is your car insurance company? \_\_\_\_\_

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Place of employment \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Period Employed \_\_\_\_\_

3 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of employment \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Period Employed \_\_\_\_\_

4 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of employment \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Period Employed \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not currently working, what is your source of income? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been arrested by any law enforcement officer? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No



Have you ever been charged with any offense even if dismissed?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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**CERTIFICATION**

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Co-Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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