



Standards for Services Programs in Supportive Housing

The social service program of a supportive housing project should demonstrate the ability to:

- Provide ongoing services that meet tenants' needs
- Enable tenants to maintain stable residency in the community
- Help tenants maximize their capacity for independent living
- Promote the development of support systems for tenants

To achieve these ends, the social service component should seek to reflect many of the following characteristics.

Service Program Design and Delivery

The agency has an explicit strategy for the delivery of services that is consistent with agency philosophy, tenants' needs and preferences, and ethical standards for service provision.

- Programming is consistent with the stated philosophy and goals of the service programs and housing models
- Programming is appropriate to the special populations served
- Programming is flexible and responsive to the expressed needs and preferences of tenants
- Programming is culturally sensitive and competent
- All attempts are made to ensure that there is adequate funding to meet staffing plans and program and tenants' needs
- There is adequate space to conduct social service activities, including staff offices, meeting rooms, and private interviewing space
- There is a mechanism in place to evaluate the service program's overall quality and progress toward program goals and outcomes
- The staff coverage schedule is clearly defined
- Caseload assignments are manageable, given resources, program goals, and resident needs
- There is adequate site coverage by supervisory personnel
- Criteria for program eligibility are clearly defined and communicated to referral sources and tenants
- The program's intake process is consistent with program goals and resources and is in accordance with statutory and administrative codes
- Criteria for termination from the program are clearly defined and communicated to tenants
- Outreach procedures reflect consistent efforts to reach out to and engage tenants
- Programming incorporates processes for goal-setting and monitoring progress toward goals

Note: This document is included within the *Supportive Services* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at www.csh.org/toolkit2. This document has been adapted from CSH's publication *Developing the "Support" in Supportive Housing*, which is available at www.csh.org/publications.

- Programming offers training to build tenants' daily living skills
- Programming provides educational and vocational assessments and training or linkages to such services
- Programming includes job placement services or linkages to such services
- There are clearly defined policies, procedures, and practices in place to address alcohol and other drug use/abuse
- Programming aims to support residential stability by providing (and/or helping tenants to access) necessary services such as medication management, relapse prevention, and budgeting assistance
- Programming links tenants with financial and in-kind benefits and the full range of community-based services
- Regular communication is maintained between program staff and outside agencies
- Programming promotes the development of community and natural support networks
- Mechanisms exist to involve family members and significant others in individual service planning as requested by tenants
- Programming addresses both the causes and effects of crisis situations (e.g., stress and anger management, conflict resolution, community meetings)
- Programming encourages public policy awareness (e.g., current events, voter education forums)

Provider/Tenant Relations

The agency has an explicit strategy for fostering positive relationships with tenants and actively seeks their input in decision-making.

- Tenants are actively involved in program planning and development
- Tenants' input is solicited and welcomed at the agency's highest organizational levels, including the board of directors
- Tenants participate in the development of their individual service plans and monitor their progress toward fulfilling stated goals and objectives
- Information about tenants is protected in accordance with legal and regulatory confidentiality guidelines
- The agency supports tenants in forming tenant/resident councils
- Tenant grievance procedures are clearly delineated in writing and include how to access legal services and representation
- Program/house rules are clearly delineated in writing and communicated to tenants
- Tenants are provided with ongoing opportunities to have input into program/house rules
- Program/house rules are consistently enforced
- Standards for leases or occupancy agreements are clearly defined

Community Linkages

The agency has a strategy for working with the community to gain support and successfully integrate tenants into local activities.

- The agency is aware of and knows how to access local health, mental health, substance abuse, crisis assistance, recreational, social, religious, and civic resources as needed by tenants
- The agency is active in linking tenants to community resources and encourages maximum participation by tenants in neighborhood life
- The agency has relationships with local police precincts and community policing forces
- The agency has relationships with the local community board and other neighborhood organizations

The Property Management/Social Services Relationship

There should be a collaborative relationship between social services and property management staff such that coordination is fostered and the roles and lines of authority are clear.

- There is agreement between management and services about the philosophy and goals of the housing model (e.g., permanent vs. transitional, voluntary vs. mandatory services)
- There are clear roles and responsibilities for all staff, preferably specified in a memorandum of understanding
- There are regularly scheduled forums for social services and property management staff to discuss coordination and address gaps in services
- There is agreement about the limitations on information sharing posed by confidentiality guidelines
- There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both parties in the tenant selection process
- There is a clearly defined process and time frame for informing applicants of acceptance or rejection from the housing program
- The social service team has input into house rules
- There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities to address house rules violations
- There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities to address rent arrears
- There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both parties in the management of evictions/discharges
- Areas of the physical plant that are available for use by property management, social services, and tenants are clearly defined

Crisis Prevention/Safety and Security

Services should be provided in a safe and supportive environment, where crises are minimized through the implementation of comprehensive crisis prevention strategies.

- Programming incorporates prevention strategies for the specific population(s) served (e.g., health and wellness, medication management, relapse prevention, safe sex)

- There is an adequate and effective plan to assure the safety and security of the building (e.g., front desk coverage, security cameras, staff beepers/backup)
- There exist clearly defined and delineated program/house rules that address disruptive behavior, use of common areas, substance abuse/use among tenants, and so on
- Program/house rules are clearly communicated to all tenants and staff and are available in written form
- Program/house rules are consistently enforced
- Staff is aware of the signs of psychiatric crises, intoxication, and withdrawal, and procedures are in place to intervene promptly and appropriately
- Procedures are in place to comply with fire safety codes (e.g., fire drills, evacuation procedures, maintaining facility within code)
- Procedures are in place to comply with public health and safety codes (e.g., maintaining property in sanitary condition, responding to public health issues in a timely manner)
- Staff members are aware of their roles in assuring a safe environment and are familiar with all relevant policies and procedures
- Staff members receive training in crisis prevention techniques and policies and procedures that are relevant to their roles and the special populations served
- Staff members are trained in basic first-aid procedures and practice universal precautions

Crisis and Emergency Protocols and Procedures

The agency has an explicit strategy for promptly responding to emergencies and crises and providing follow-up and support to staff and tenants.

- There are clearly delineated and appropriate roles for property management and social service staff in emergency and crisis situations
- Procedures are in place for responding to psychiatric emergencies, including violent ideation/behavior, suicidal ideation/behavior, and homicidal ideation/behavior
- Procedures are in place for responding to medical emergencies
- Procedures are in place for responding to a death on the premises
- Procedures are in place for responding to crises involving the physical plant, such as fire and emergency evacuation
- The agency has clear procedures for addressing and reporting child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and physical abuse
- Staff members understand and receive regular training in crisis intervention policies and procedures
- There is adequate provision of supervisory/administrative oversight in emergencies
- The agency has an explicit incident review process that involves relevant staff and tenants in the review of crises, emergencies, and other incidents and the development of follow-up/corrective action plans

Recording and Reporting

The agency should maintain adequate documentation of services delivered, which is in compliance with funding source requirements and administrative and statutory codes and is in accordance with ethical standards for service provision.

- A case record is initiated upon acceptance of a tenant's enrollment in the program
- Initial contact is made within two weeks of a tenant's move into the housing
- All case records include basic identifying information and emergency contacts
- All case records include signed releases of information for confidential information that is updated every six months or as required by law
- All case records include an initial assessment of the tenant's needs and short- and long-term goals
- Assessments and service plans are updated biannually or as required by contractual obligations
- All case records contain evidence of tenant participation in the service planning process
- All case records contain documentation of programming attendance
- Chart notes are entered on a weekly to monthly basis
- Chart notes address progress toward goals and objectives of the service plan
- Ninety percent of case records are up to date
- Case records and related documents are maintained in a secure and confidential manner and in accordance with all applicable statutory and administrative codes
- There is evidence of interdisciplinary collaboration in the case planning process

Note: CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing* includes additional information regarding service planning issues under both *Designing the Services Plan* and *Preparing for Tenants' Services Needs* in the *Supportive Services* section of the *Toolkit*, available at www.csh.org/toolkit2services.