

What is Supportive Housing?

“**Supportive Housing**” is another way of saying “home” for people who have been homeless, especially people with disabilities. While a house is just a roof over your head, home is where people care about you and where you get support. And that’s what supportive housing is: permanent, high-quality, affordable housing combined with “supports” – people who work with tenants to get counseling, health care, medication, training in basic life skills, and jobs – whatever is needed to help them put their lives back on track.

What Supportive Housing Is

- **It looks like any other apartment building.** Each unit has a private bath and kitchen. Tenants hold their own leases and pay their own rents.
- **It’s for a mix of people.** The tenancy is a mix of formerly homeless, working people and people with disabilities to provide positive role models and to prevent stigmatization.
- **It’s designed for people who can live independently.** As in all buildings, tenants must be responsible to their neighbors and are subject to eviction for disruptive or dangerous behavior.
- **It provides independence, peer support and a sense of community,** which are often lacking in the lives of the formerly homeless and people with disabilities.
- **It has on-site support staff** to provide crisis intervention, case management, help in basis living skills, and help in obtaining needed health care and job training.
- **It’s cost effective.** Supportive housing costs less than most alternative approaches to care and saves dollars otherwise spent on crisis treatment.
- **It has a proven track record of success.** A recent government study found that more than 85% of supportive housing residents stay housed and become good neighbors.

What It Is Not

- **Supportive housing is not a group home or any type of treatment program.** It is permanent housing in which services are provided on an as-needed basis.
- **Supportive housing is neither a welfare hotel nor a government run housing project.** The housing will be privately owned and managed by a non-profit organization with a proven track record that will be accountable to its neighbors.
- **Supportive housing is not for everyone.** Tenants will be screened to ensure that they want to be good neighbors and are able to live independently.
- **Supportive housing is not a shelter.** Supportive housing is permanent (not emergency) housing. Tenants hold leases and pay rent while having access to services that will help them live independently.
- **Supportive housing does not hurt the neighborhood.** Instead, it helps solve local homelessness and provides much-needed affordable housing units, it will upgrade and enhance the property on which it is built or rehabilitated, and it will be well run and well managed. The property will be well maintained, and security enhancements will ensure the safety of tenants and neighbors. Recent studies of communities where supportive housing has been developed found that *not one* experienced a drop in property values, increased crime or a change in the neighborhood’s character.

From the CSH Pilots Housing Development Guide