



Corporation for Supportive Housing

Rural Supportive Housing e-Manual

This e-Manual is a collection of resources about homelessness in rural areas, supportive housing development, and examples of supportive housing in rural areas. The purpose of this e-Manual is to provide information and guidance for organizations in rural areas who are considering creating supportive housing and to provide information to groups who are learning about rural homelessness and how to permanently end homelessness in communities.

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And finally, CSH - Minnesota wishes to acknowledge the generosity of all the organizations that provided information for the project profiles contained within this e-Manual.

About CSH

Founded in 1991, CSH helps communities to create permanent affordable housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. We fulfill our mission by providing TA, training, financial support, and policy work. To date, we have helped to create over 91,700 PSH units through our direct TA and policy work. CSH-Minnesota opened in 1993 at the invitation of local funders, service providers, and government. CSH-MN has played a pivotal role in the growth of a strong PSH industry in the state. To date, CSH-MN has provided TA, loans, and grants (\$13 million) to project sponsors to develop roughly 3,000 PSH units. In 2008 alone, CSH offered capacity-building assistance to more than 875 Minnesota organizations.

If you have questions about resources within this e-Manual or would like to suggest materials for inclusion, please contact the Corporation for Supportive Housing - Minnesota Program at mn@csh.org.



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Welcome and Overview

Welcome to the *Rural Supportive Housing e-Manual*, a project of the Corporation for Supportive Housing - Minnesota Program. For over six years CSH - Minnesota has worked with a wide range of organizations in rural Minnesota by assisting with the development of new units of supportive housing and providing opportunities for agencies to increase their capacity to successfully develop, operate and provide services in supportive housing. We have incorporated our knowledge and experiences into this *e-manual*, as well as included existing CSH development tools. We are especially proud to highlight the project profiles and the organizations that made the developments possible and who are working each day to keep households stable in permanent supportive housing across rural Minnesota.

The purpose of this document is to provide examples of existing, successful supportive housing located in rural communities and small towns, to provide access to a range of development tools designed to assist an organization through the process of creating supportive housing, and provide educational information about homelessness in rural areas. Much of the development information included herein is focused on single site supportive housing but is also valuable to organizations that are creating a scattered- site supportive housing program. Among other development and programmatic items, the project concept, assessing organization capacity, creating effective partnerships, delivering supportive services, and budgeting are important for both single and scattered site programs.

This *e-manual* is divided into seven sections and is designed to be utilized in its electronic format by accessing information through hyperlinks. This e-manual will be updated annually to include new information and project profiles of rural supportive housing.



Section 1 Understanding Rural Homelessness

In many cases rural homelessness looks different than homelessness in urban areas. Frequently rural communities do not have homeless shelters like those in urban areas; therefore, the community can't "see" people experiencing homelessness unless the community looks in certain locations or provides services that are utilized by people experiencing homelessness. Even agencies providing services may not recognize that somebody is "couch surfing" or living out of a vehicle, as many times a post office box suffices for an address but does not equal stable, affordable, permanent housing.

In rural areas people without permanent, stable housing often spend nights in tents, vehicles, chicken coops, fish shacks, porches, doubled and tripled up with other families, in 24-hour businesses, offices, bathrooms, storage spaces, and many other places not fit for human habitation. The causes of homelessness in rural areas are the same as the causes of homelessness in urban areas: unaffordable rent, chronic illness, eviction, lost job, and problems with drugs and/or alcohol.

A significant part of creating a permanent supportive housing project is educating the community, funding agencies, board members, and potential project partners about the needs and issues of rural homelessness. The information included here can be a helpful tool for creating an awareness of what is homelessness in your community.

Facts about rural homelessness

[Homelessness in rural Minnesota \(Wilder Research\)](#)

[Fact Checker Rural Homelessness \(NAEH\)](#)

[Rural Homelessness Fact Sheet \(Housing Assistance Council\)](#)

[Geography of Homelessness, Part 1: Defining the Spectrum \(NAEH\)](#)

[Geography of Homelessness, Part 2: Prevalence of Homelessness \(NAEH\)](#)

Videos on homelessness in rural areas

[Homelessness in Kandiyohi County \(You Tube\)](#)

[KOOTASCA Community Action Homeless Awareness \(You Tube\)](#)



Section 2 Getting Your Project Started

It is critical to a successful project that the sponsoring organization has a clear idea of what the supportive housing will achieve, who will live there, what kinds of services will be provided, and what kinds of partnerships need to be in place to develop and operating the housing successfully long term. The tools below will have the sponsoring agency and their partners clarify the project concept, identify the kinds of partnerships needed, select a site, and build the critical community support needed to move a project forward. Much of this information is focused on single site supportive housing but can also be utilized to create a successful scattered site supportive housing program as well.

In rural areas there is frequently a lack of experienced supportive or affordable housing developers, property managers, and services providers. This limits the choices of project partners and can stretch the comfort levels of each organization involved in the project, highlighting the critical need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities of each partner.

Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) issues are the same in rural and urban communities, although in rural communities an organization may be able to engage board members in a more powerful way especially if board members are influential community members who are able to impact the community in a positive way to build support for the project. Be sure to spend time developing community support plan.

First Steps (CSH)

- [Understanding Permanent Supportive Housing](#)
- [Project Concept Worksheet](#)
- [Assess Organizational Capacity](#)
- [Build the Development Team](#)

Site Selection and Building Design (CSH)

- [Selecting and Securing a Site](#)
- [Suggestions for Physical Design Standards in Supportive Housing Developments](#)
- [Suggestions for Design Standards in Supportive Housing](#)

Community Support

- [Thinking beyond "NIMBY": Building Community Support for Supportive Housing \(CSH\)](#)
- [Six Steps to Building Community Support \(CSH\)](#)
- [Community Acceptance Case Study: Outreach Center Apartments \(CSH\)](#)
- [NIMBY Report: Range Mental Health Center \(National Low Income Housing Coalition\)](#)



Section 3 Budgets and Financing

The budgets and general financing are similar for urban and rural supportive housing. Some of the different challenges for rural supportive housing are a smaller number of local funding sources and foundations, educating funders about the need, the higher cost per unit for smaller developments, or how the owner will successfully operate a project that has supportive housing units mixed with affordable units.

Development Budget (CSH)

[How to Prepare a Supportive Housing Project Development Budget](#)

Operating Budget (CSH)

[How to Prepare a Supportive Housing Operating Budget](#)

[Preparing a Supportive Housing Proforma](#)

Services Budget (CSH)

[Considerations for Developing and Managing a Supportive Services Budget \(and Sample Budget\)](#)

Assembling Financing and Deal Structuring (CSH)

[Tools to Assist with Assembling Financing](#)

Section 4 Housing Operations

This section provides a variety of tools related to the provision of property management services in supportive housing settings, including the importance of mission-driven property management, tenant screening and selection procedures, lease and lease enforcement issues, reasonable accommodations for tenants with disabilities, safety and security protocols, and maintenance issues.

[Introduction to Property Management \(CSH\)](#)

Tenant Selection

[Tenant Screening, Selection, and Move in \(CSH\)](#)

[Outreach in rural areas \(MN CoCs\)](#)



Section 5 Service Strategies and Plans

The close integration of supportive services activities with the operating of affordable housing is what defines supportive housing. The documents in this section focus on the provision of effective services in supportive housing settings, including designing the services plan, effective service delivery and community-building strategies, and preparing for the needs of tenants of supportive housing.

Supportive Services (CSH)

[Service Strategies](#)

[Service Planning](#)

Tenant Leadership and Engagement (CSH)

[Tenant Participation in Supportive Housing Settings](#)

[Involving Tenants in the Decision-making Process](#)

[Effective Engagement in Supportive Housing](#)

[Case Studies: Finding Common Ground and Engagement Strategies](#)

Section 6 Profiles of Rural Supportive Housing

This section consists of project profiles of rural supportive housing; they demonstrate the wide array of partnerships, buildings, services, and tenants of supportive housing in rural towns and areas. All of the projects included here have received technical or financial assistance from CSH.

Single Site Examples (CSH)

[Beacon House](#), Stubenville, OH

[Belle Haven Town Homes](#), Princeton, MN

[Country View Town Homes](#), Willmar, MN

[New Holland](#), Danville, IL

North Shore Horizons, Two Harbors, MN (coming soon)

Radichel Town Homes, Mankato, MN (coming soon)

Rudy Perpich Apartments, Hibbing, MN (coming soon)

[Rural Eastern Kentucky](#), KY

Scattered Site Examples

[Allegan County](#), MI (CSH)

[Hearth Connection](#), MN (Hearth Connection)



Section 7 American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative

The American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative (AISHI) is a Minnesota-based initiative designed to create units of supportive housing in Indian Country, increase access and utilization of funding by tribes and American Indian organizations, and to increase the capacity to develop and operate supportive housing designed to meet the specific needs of a tribe or off-reservation American Indian organization.

Homelessness is a significant and growing problem in Indian country. Whereas American Indians make up 1.5 percent of the general U.S. population, they make up 8% of the homeless population. In Minnesota, over 1,200 American Indians (or 30% of those interviewed) are homeless or near-homeless. Nearly one-third report one chronic health condition, 29% consider themselves to be chemically dependent, and 23% have a serious mental illness.

To address these challenges, permanent supportive housing (PSH) has emerged as a proven solution. PSH is permanent, affordable housing with voluntary supportive services. The basic model remains the same for Native American PSH and dovetails with how tribes traditionally serve their people. Included in this section is a white paper about the Initiative which is currently operating in Minnesota and expanding nationally and project profiles of supportive housing developed by tribes.

[AISHI White Paper](#) (CSH)

Project Profiles (CSH)

[Dream Catcher Homes](#), Ogema, MN

[Bemidji Supportive Housing](#), Bemidji, MN (coming soon)

[Fond du Lac Supportive Housing](#), Fond du Lac Reservation, MN

Closing

Rural supportive housing can make a significant positive impact in rural areas and small towns where a permanent solution is needed to end homelessness for community members. Supportive housing provides a stable, independent housing option for households and singles who are struggling to maintain housing, health and well-being. Hopefully the resources in this e-Manual will assist organizations with a vision for creating permanent affordable housing with services tailored for tenants who have been homeless. You may also find helpful information in the [Small Towns Toolkit](#) created by CSH- Southern New England Program. This e-Manual will be updated annually to include new information, resources and project profiles. Please check back for new editions.