# SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:
## A CRUCIAL PART OF AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM

Supportive housing (sometimes also called permanent supportive housing or PSH) is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of people with a history of chronic homelessness. The services provided with supportive housing are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and to connect people with community-based health care, treatment, and employment services.

Since supportive housing is paired with a robust set of services and an ongoing subsidy, not everyone experiencing homelessness (or even chronic homelessness) necessarily needs the intensity of support provided by this intervention. However, supportive housing is an important part of an effective homeless response system, so that the most vulnerable in a community can stabilize in housing. Below are some key practices for ensuring the success of your supportive housing program:

## Access, Prioritization, and Referral

It's easy to fall into the trap of serving those who seem most likely to stabilize in housing, but supportive housing is intended to serve the most vulnerable in a community. Homelessness disproportionately affects people of color and other marginalized populations. It's vital to make sure that your program isn't deepening these disparities through who receives (or doesn't receive) access to supportive housing.

- Work to identify the most vulnerable in your community by offering flexible access points and engagement strategies (such as outreach) that meet people where they're at.
- Proactively work towards equitable access to supportive housing.
- Ensure a quick, seamless connection for the individual or head of household once referred to supportive housing. This may require continued planned engagement and document procurement prior to the official referral.

## Services

The key to housing stability is tailored, high-quality services.

- Provide culturally responsive, wrap-around services driven by the tenant. These services must be voluntary and extensive to meet the unique needs of each individual or household.
- Seek adequate and flexible funding to ensure quality, well-staffed support services. Work to lower caseloads, so that case managers can focus meaningfully on community integration and housing stabilization.
- Ensure that property management and support services are clearly defined and focused on their distinct roles, while collaborating to keep tenants housed. Even when the same organization manages both functions, it is essential to maintain a clear separation of responsibilities while working on a common goal.
- Tailor management strategies to meet the unique needs of tenants living in scattered site and site-based supportive housing.

## Move-on

Sometimes tenants stabilize to the degree that they no longer need the intensive ongoing support provided by supportive housing. In these cases, it's important to work with tenants to help them move on, which frees up a spot in supportive housing.

- Create specific, systematized move-on strategies for these situations and train your staff on how to use them.
- Arrange sources of long-term subsidies and ongoing community-based services for those who have moved on into other housing.

## Measurements

Productive use of data is vital to make sure that your program is effective and equitable.

- Look at your data overall, but also analyze your data disaggregated by race, gender, age, and other categories.
- Listen to your tenants and staff to learn more about their experiences and concerns.
- Use data to ensure equity in access, referral, services offered, and utilization of those services. Track exits from supportive housing back to homelessness.
- Identify areas to improve, set goals related to these areas, and involve your entire staff in reaching those goals.



**WEBINAR: "SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: A CRUCIAL PART TO AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM"**

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