

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS & OTHER RESOURCES

1. **What is supportive housing?**

Supportive housing is permanent rental housing linked to a range of support services designed to enable residents to maintain stable housing and lead fuller lives. Supportive housing is an alternative to more costly institutional settings.

2. **Who lives in supportive housing?**

Supportive housing can help people with disabilities, seniors, families, formerly homeless people and people living with HIV and AIDS to maintain stable housing and to access the services they need.

3. **What kinds of services are provided in supportive housing?**

The range of services offered is flexible and depends upon the needs of the residents in each development. Services can include medical and mental health care, vocational and employment services, substance abuse treatment, child care and independent living skills training. Services may be offered on-site or off-site.

4. **How is supportive housing financed?**

Supportive housing developments are financed by a combination of the residential rents, conventional bank loans, federal, state and local government loans or grants, and contributions from private foundations and organizations. Typically, local government contributions leverage much larger federal amounts.

5. **Will supportive housing residents be good neighbors?**

Yes. Supportive housing residents are carefully screened. They want to live in safe, attractive housing in good neighborhoods as much as anyone else. Residents sign leases which commit them to "house rules," and management enforces those rules. Professional property management with on-site managers is responsive to community concerns that may arise.

6. **Will supportive housing cause traffic, noise and parking problems?**

No. Such problems are unlikely because the majority of

Mark Schwartz came to South Park Residence when he was homeless. Thanks to stable housing and supportive services, he now heads South Park's Tenant Board.



residents do not own cars. Like any other development project, supportive housing proposals are reviewed in the environmental and design stages by the city's planning commission and building department. Developments with potential impacts beyond city standards are required to mitigate (or reduce) these impacts to acceptable levels.

7. **How is supportive housing developed?**

Most supportive housing residences are developed by non-profit housing developers in partnership with non-profit service providers. Many of these non-profits are local community or faith-based organizations. The local community sets the framework by its housing needs assessment, land use requirements and available funding. The community and the developer partner in a building concept, potential financing and finding available land. Often, supportive housing proposals are subject to a public review process including hearings before the Planning Commission. Developers may also consult with neighborhood organizations or hold community meetings to get input.

8. **How successful is supportive housing?**

Very successful. In contrast to their previous living situations and alternatives, most residents thrive in supportive housing. The alternatives to supportive housing — crisis approaches to care, institutionalization, and repetitive short-term treatment — are both less effective and more expensive.

9. **Will supportive housing fit into my neighborhood?**

Yes. Supportive housing proposals must meet all local planning code and design requirements. Because they blend in so well, you may be living near a supportive housing development and not even be aware of it. Research conducted by numerous independent groups has regularly documented that supportive housing has no impact on nearby property values.

10. **Why isn't there more supportive housing?**

The primary constraint is lack of funding. And, since policymakers and communities are still learning about this new model and its successful track record, neighbors or local government may raise questions or concerns about supportive housing proposals. This lack of familiarity sometimes makes it difficult and expensive to locate sites for supportive housing developments.



James Lee Court serves low income families and singles.

For more information about supportive housing:

Organizations

Each of the organizations listed below contributes to the creation of high-quality supportive housing in the greater Bay Area. Please contact them for more information.

California Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

7311 Greenhaven Dr., Suite 1754, Sacramento, California 95831
Phone (916) 392-5111

Provides statewide representation of not-for-profit organizations across the whole range of senior housing, including supportive housing; hosts an annual forum on affordable senior housing.

Corporation for Supportive Housing

1540 San Pablo Avenue, Suite 600, Oakland, California 94612
Phone: (510) 251-1910

Offers general information and referrals about supportive housing; provides grants, loans and technical assistance to non-profit developers; facilitates national innovation exchange; works with every level of government to provide more and better supportive housing.

Regarding supportive housing for persons with mental disabilities:

East Bay: **Corporation for Supportive Housing** (see above)

North Bay: **Bucklew Programs**, 914 Mission Avenue, San Rafael, California 94901; Phone (415) 457-6964

Northern Peninsula: **Mental Health Association of San Mateo County**, 2686 Spring Street, Redwood City, California 94063; Phone (650) 368-3345

San Francisco: **Mental Health Association of San Francisco**, 965 Mission Street, Suite 425, San Francisco, California 94103; Phone: (415) 882-6237

South Bay: **Alliance for Community Care**, 86 South 14th Street, San Jose, California 95112; Phone (408) 938-6789

Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH)

369 Pine Street, Suite 350, San Francisco, California 94104
Phone: (415) 989-8160

Offers general information and referrals about affordable housing; provides speakers; arranges housing tours; provides publications and technical assistance.



Supportive housing offers seniors opportunities to lead dignified, self-sufficient lives.

Videos

- **In Our Back Yard (20 minutes, 1996)***

Video and accompanying printed materials explain and demonstrate the benefits of supportive housing. Features interviews with police, neighbors, merchants, politicians, tenants, providers and a real estate developer.

- **CBS 60 Minutes segment on supportive housing (15 minutes, 1997)***

This investigation by the 60 Minutes team examined supportive housing and found that it was successful.



Bay Bridge is a six unit complex in Emeryville serving persons physically disabled with HIV or AIDS.

Publications

- **Beyond Housing**

Profiles of 29 low income service-enriched housing for special needs populations and property management programs. It demonstrates how property management programs can balance sensitivity to the needs of low income people with sound management practices. To order, contact the Enterprise Foundation, (410) 964-1230.

- **Understanding Supportive Housing***

Resource documents on supportive housing including a chart outlining the development process, a description of capital and operating financial considerations, tips on support service planning, program summaries of federal funding sources, and a resource guide.

Websites

- **The Enterprise Foundation, Best Practices Database**

Contains information and strategies for low income housing and community development. Enables queries on hundreds of model documents, model program descriptions, and recommended publications. www.enterprisefoundation.org

- **HUD Best Practices**

Contains success stories of HUD's field office staff, grantees and nonprofit organizations. www.hud.gov/whatworks.html

- **National Low-Income Housing Coalition**

Provides research, education, and technical assistance to local, state, and national organizations trying to develop solutions to critical housing needs. www.handsnet.org/nlihc

** Videos and publications can be obtained through the Corporation for Supportive Housing, (212) 986-2966.*



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