



# Supportive Housing

## Affordable Housing + Support Services

Permanent supportive housing is decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing that provides tenants with the rights of tenancy and links to voluntary and flexible supports and services for people with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness. Permanent supportive housing is a proven, effective means of reintegrating chronically homeless and other highly vulnerable homeless families and individuals with psychiatric disabilities or chronic health challenges into the community by addressing their basic needs for housing and providing ongoing support.

Supportive housing links decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing with flexible, voluntary support services designed to help the individual or family stay housed and live a more productive life in the community. It looks and functions much like any other brand of housing. People living in supportive housing have a private and secure place to make their home, just like other members of the community, with the same rights and responsibilities. The difference is that they can access, at their option, services designed to address their individual needs and preferences. These services may include the help of a case manager or counselor, help in building independent living and tenancy skills, assistance with integrating into the community, and connections to community-based health care, treatment, and employment services.

Permanent supportive housing programs allow people with one or more serious disabling conditions to stabilize their housing and address underlying conditions that often have gone untreated for many years. The combination of housing and supportive services creates a synergy that allows tenants to take steps toward recovery and independence.

The “permanent” in “permanent supportive housing” means the length of stay is up to the individual or family. There is no time limitation, and tenants may live in their homes as long as they meet the basic obligations of tenancy. While participation in services is encouraged, it is not a condition of living in the housing. Housing affordability is ensured either through a rent subsidy or by setting rents at affordable levels.

There is no single model for supportive housing’s design. The provision of supportive housing may involve the renovation or construction of new housing, set-asides of apartments within privately-owned buildings, or leasing of individual apartments dispersed throughout an area.

Available data reinforce evidence that permanent supportive housing is an effective approach for meeting the needs of people with disabilities and chronic health conditions who have experienced homelessness. Research indicates that this combination of long-term housing and wraparound services leads to improved residential stability and reduction in psychiatric symptoms. Studies have also found that supportive housing is associated with significant reductions in costs for emergency room visits, hospitalizations, shelters, sobering centers, jails, and other public services used by people experiencing homelessness.

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