

HUD Homeless Assistance Programs and Permanent Supportive Housing

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Housekeeping

- All on mute. Use Questions function for substantive questions and for technical concerns.
- Problems getting on the webinar? Send an e-mail to NCLER@acl.hhs.gov.
- Written materials and a recording will be available at NCLER.acl.gov. See also the chat box for this web address.

About NCLER

The National Center on Law and Elder Rights (NCLER) provides the legal services and aging and disability communities with the tools and resources they need to serve older adults with the greatest economic and social needs. A centralized, one-stop shop for legal assistance, NCLER provides Legal Training, Case Consultations, and Technical Assistance on Legal Systems Development. Justice in Aging administers the NCLER through a contract with the Administration for Community Living's Administration on Aging.

About Justice in Aging

Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, housing, elder justice, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we've focused our efforts primarily on populations that have traditionally lacked legal protection such as women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

About Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

CSH collaborates to advance solutions that build equity in our communities by linking services, housing, and healthcare to improve the lives of vulnerable people, maximize public resources, and build healthy communities.

CSH is a touchstone for new ideas and best practices, a collaborative and pragmatic community partner, and an influential advocate for supportive housing.

Agenda

- Basics of HUD homeless assistance programs
- How advocates can refer clients for assistance and participate in improving their community's homeless response system for older adults
- Importance of supportive housing for older adults and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness

Older Adult Homelessness

- More than one-third of adults experiencing chronic homelessness are people age 55 and over.
- In 2023, nearly half (46%) of adults age 55 and over experiencing homelessness were unsheltered (living in streets, cars, parks, etc.).
- Research suggests older adults, especially older adults of color, experience more barriers to accessing the HUD homeless service system.
- Black older adults are the least likely to be permanently housed through the homeless service system.

Continuums of Care (CoCs)

- HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) program funds coordinated, community-wide homeless response systems across the country.
- CoCs exist in every state and are local, regional, or statewide groups that work to reduce homelessness and coordinate homeless assistance projects providing housing and supportive services.
- [Locate your CoC here.](#)

Main Homeless Assistance Interventions Funded by HUD

- Emergency Shelter
 - Temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness.
- Transitional Housing
 - Temporary housing with supportive services for up to two years.
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
 - Provides short- or medium-term rental assistance and services, including case management, to help people secure permanent housing as soon as possible.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**
 - Provides indefinite rental assistance with voluntary supportive services for people experiencing homelessness who also have disabilities; for people with the highest needs.

“Housing First” Removes Tenant Screening Barriers

- HUD prioritizes funding homeless assistance projects that adopt the “Housing First” model.
- PSH and other programs with Housing First approach have low-barrier admissions policies.
- Unlike typical private or other HUD-subsidized housing, Housing First programs generally do not screen people out due to issues such as poor credit history, lack of income, past evictions, or criminal records (with limited exceptions).

Eligibility for HUD Homeless Assistance Programs

- Refer older adults who need homeless assistance; CoCs/homeless service providers will screen for eligibility.
- Must generally at least meet HUD's definitions of "homeless" or "at risk of homelessness."
- HUD also encourages CoCs to prioritize serving "chronically homeless" through PSH.
 - People with disabilities who have been continually homeless for at least a year or have had repeated episodes of homelessness amounting to a year.

Referring Older Adults to Coordinated Entry

- Each CoC has coordinated entry system.
- Coordinated entry places people on priority list for referral to appropriate homeless assistance projects.
- People with highest needs prioritized; many individuals won't receive referrals due to lack of resources.
- Coordinated entry process differs between CoCs – contact your local CoC to find out how/where to refer individuals.
- People waiting on priority list should periodically update coordinated entry staff about contact info, significant changes, etc.

Coordinated Entry Is “Front Door” to HUD Homeless Resources

- Coordinated entry is generally the only way to access many HUD-funded homeless assistance projects, including many HUD-funded PSH projects.
- Note: If you are serving someone who is living in a shelter, that person may still need to be connected to coordinated entry – not all shelters receive HUD funding and participate in coordinated entry.

What About HUD Subsidized Housing Programs?

- Sometimes coordinated entry refers people to PHAs for certain vouchers/housing assistance designated for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- But, in general, coordinated entry does NOT place people on waiting lists for HUD subsidized housing programs like Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 202, public housing, etc.
- Individuals should [apply for these programs](#) separately and continue pursuing other housing options.

Advocates for Older Adults Should Participate in CoCs

- Many CoCs and their boards lack members who represent older adults or who are from the aging service network.
- CoC membership and meetings are usually open to anyone with interest in homelessness issues.
- CoCs should include representatives of subpopulations of people experiencing homelessness.
- Board must be representative of relevant organizations.
- HUD guidance directs CoCs to collaborate with service providers outside of homeless service system.

How Can Advocates for Older Adults Contribute to CoCs?

- Advocates serving older adults have knowledge and expertise that homeless service providers generally do not and can:
 - Influence a CoC's strategic planning by highlighting housing and service needs of older adults.
 - Help shape coordinated entry process to ensure equitable access for older adults.
 - Refer older adults to coordinated entry and help CoCs with referrals to aging and disability network.
 - Provide housing/and or services as part of supportive housing projects for older adults.

Key Takeaways

- Advocates can help older adults access resources, such as PSH, in the HUD homeless service system.
- Refer older adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness to your CoC's coordinated entry process—generally the only way to access many HUD-funded homeless assistance projects, including HUD-funded PSH.
- Advocate for and share your expertise on older adults by participating in CoCs.

Supportive Housing: An Important Community Living Option for People Who Are Aging with Low Incomes

Accessing Housing Resources

- Only 1 in 4 low-income at-risk individuals can access federal rental assistance.
- Older adults and people with disabilities face additional barriers and challenges with housing.
- Partnerships and advocacy are key ingredients to addressing this scarcity.

Supportive Housing and Olmstead

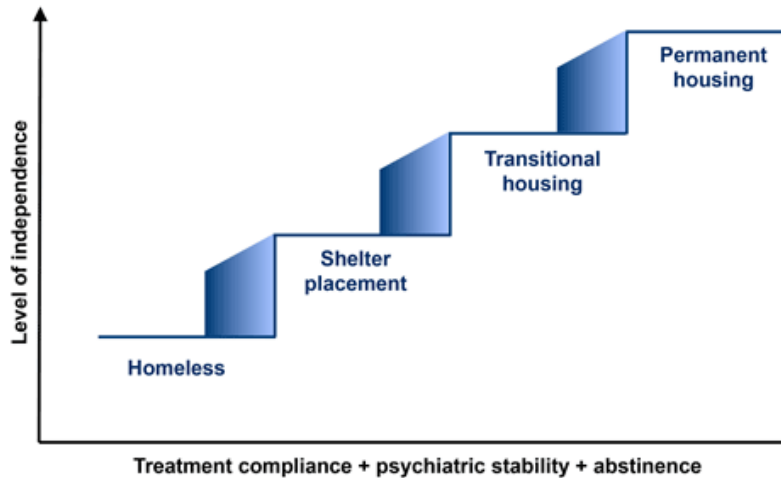
- CSH Policy Brief: [Supportive Housing and Olmstead: State of the Conversation](#)
- Provides information and describes issues policymakers and advocates must understand to ensure supportive housing meets the legal requirements related to the Olmstead decision.

Supportive Housing 101

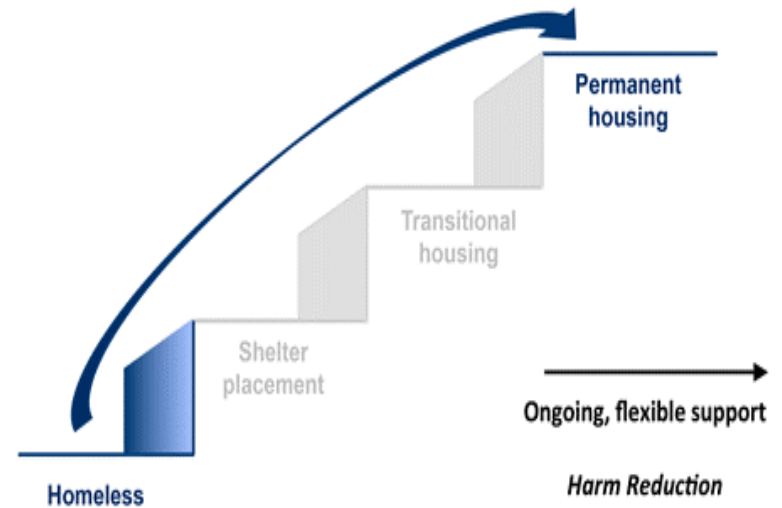
- Many people who are aging in the community just need affordable housing access, but a segment of the population needs in-home and on-site services.
- Supportive housing combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges live with stability, autonomy, and dignity.
- Not time-limited.

Traditional Approach vs. Housing First Approach

- Traditional Approach



- Housing First Approach



Key Principles of Housing First

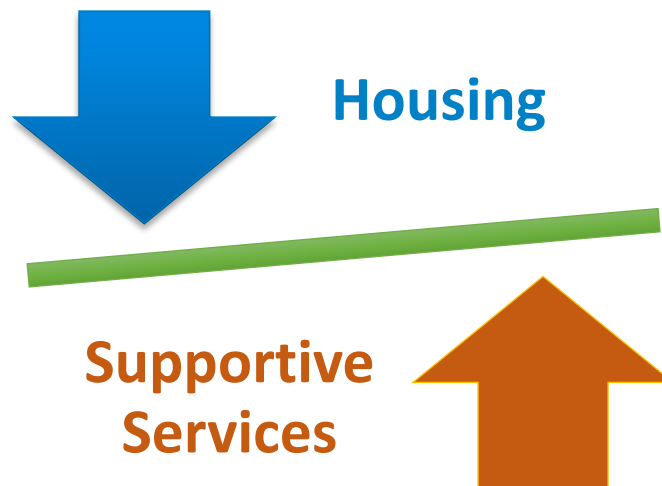
- Quick access to housing
- Units targeted to systemically marginalized populations
- Provide leases and tenant protections
- Centered on consumer choice
- Robust support services with assertive engagement
- Embrace a harm/risk-reduction approach
- Tenancy is not dependent on participation in services

Supportive Housing Engages Households with Multiple Barriers

- Older adults
- People with mental health challenges and substance use disorders
- Families involved in the child welfare system
- People impacted by the justice system
- People experiencing chronic homelessness
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Transition age youth
- Veterans
- People with chronic health conditions

Who Lives in Supportive Housing?

- For individuals who **BUT FOR HOUSING** cannot access and make effective use of treatment and supportive services in the community.
- And **BUT FOR ASSERTIVE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES** cannot access and sustain stable housing in the community.



Supportive Housing Models

- Single site (single building or property)
- Scattered site (dispersed units across multiple properties)

Key Components of Supportive Housing

- Engages households with multiple barriers
- Housing is affordable
- Provides unit with lease
- Engages tenants in flexible, voluntary services
- Whole-person care coordination
- Supports connecting with community

What Supportive Housing is NOT

- Treatment model or method
- Transitional
- Licensed community care

Ensuring Quality Supportive Housing

- Centers on tenant choice
- Services are assertive and voluntary
 - Tenancy is not dependent upon participation in services
 - If staff thinks the person would benefit from assistance, they continue to engage

Service Options

- Offered in-house or in partnership and with referrals to other agencies
- Housing-focused supportive services to obtain and maintain housing
- Behavioral health services
- Primary care
- Dental care
- Specialty care
- Childcare
- Supportive employment and education
- Whatever it takes to help people stay housed

Supportive Housing Standards: An Overview

- **Tenant-Centered**
 - Every aspect of housing and services focuses on meeting tenant needs
- **Accessible**
 - Tenants of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities enter housing quickly and easily, through an equitable and transparent process
- **Coordinated**
 - All supportive housing partners work together to achieve shared goals
- **Integrated**
 - Housing provides tenants with choices, honors their identities and backgrounds, promotes belonging and facilitates community connections
- **Sustainable**
 - Housing and services operate successfully and have long-term funding

Questions?

Additional Resources

- [JIA Issue Brief, HUD Homeless Assistance Programs: A Basic Primer for Aging Advocates](#)
- [CSH Website](#) (contact health@csh.org for more information or questions)
- [NCLER, Trauma-Informed Practices: Serving Older Adults Facing Housing Instability](#)
- [ACL Housing and Services Resource Center](#)
- [NASHP, Health and Housing: Introduction to Cross-Sector Collaboration](#)
- [USICH, Older Adults and Homelessness: How Continuums of Care and Area Agencies on Aging Can Collaborate](#)

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