



Understanding Supportive Housing

Supportive Housing Models

Just as the communities and neighborhoods in which supportive housing exist are diverse, so too are individual supportive housing projects. Supportive housing projects can have units located in the same building or scattered throughout the community. A given project or property may include units of affordable or market-rate housing mixed with supportive housing. Supportive services may be delivered on-site, in the community or by mobile teams. Supportive housing projects can create units using a variety of methods, ranging from constructing a new building on vacant land, to leasing existing units in the private rental market, to securing units set aside in an affordable housing development. The most appropriate model and unit-creation method will change based on tenants' preferences and needs, the type of housing stock and financing sources available, the norms and history of a community's real estate market, and the capacity and interest of the involved organizations.

In general, supportive housing models are described by the answers to the following four questions:

1. **Will the units be located in one building or scattered throughout multiple properties or buildings?**
2. **What portion of the total units in a property will be supportive housing?**
3. **How will the units included in the supportive housing project be created?**
4. **What is the overall strategy for the delivery of supportive services?**

Will the Units Be Located in One Building or Scattered Throughout Multiple Properties or Buildings?

Although there are many variations on these basic models, supportive housing is often categorized into two broad categories:

- **Single-Site**
 - This term is typically used to describe a model in which all of the supportive housing is located in one building.
- **Scattered-Site**
 - This term is typically used to describe a model in which supportive housing units are part of a single project located in two or more buildings or properties.

What Portion of the Total Units in a Given Property is Supportive Housing?

The portion of total units in a given property that are supportive housing has historically ranged from a single unit in a scattered-site model, up to 100% in a single-site model in which all units in a building are supportive housing. Projects that contain an intentional mix of supportive housing and non-supportive housing units within the same building are sometimes referred to as “mixed-tenancy.”

How will the Units Included in the Supportive Housing Project Be Created?

Although there are many variations as outlined below, supportive housing is created primarily by using either a **building** strategy or a **leasing** strategy. Both strategies can result in successful supportive housing projects and deciding between them is a function of community conditions, strategic funding opportunities, and organizational preference and capacity.



Building

- **New Construction or Acquisition/Rehabilitation**
 - New units of supportive housing are developed either through new construction or through acquisition and rehabilitation of an existing structure. Projects developed using this method may dedicate all or a portion of their units to supportive housing. Although units are often developed on a single site as one building, they also can be scattered throughout the community, as in a project that includes the acquisition and rehabilitation of multiple single-family homes.
- **Set-Asides**
 - Units of housing are set aside in affordable housing developments for use as supportive housing. Tenants must usually meet the same entrance criteria as the non-supportive housing tenants, and an additional rent subsidy is often required for the units to be affordable to low-income tenants.

Leasing

- **Master Leasing/Sponsor-Based Rental Subsidy**
 - An organization, typically a non-profit or government agency, contracts for or leases a portion of the units in an existing building. This master tenant, in turn, subleases the units to supportive housing tenants. Supportive housing projects using this method could be a small percentage of the total units in the building, all the way up to the entire building.
- **Tenant-Based Rental Subsidy**
 - Tenants have a rental subsidy that can be used to rent units in the private rental market. Typically, tenants pay 30% of their income toward rent, and the subsidy pays the remainder, up to the Fair Market Rent Value, as determined by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Tenants live in units of housing scattered throughout the community and can select from a wide variety of units.

What is the Overall Strategy for the Delivery of Supportive Services?

The general strategy for the provision of supportive services in a given project will depend upon the answers to the previous three questions above and the characteristics of the targeted tenants. Although each project will have a detailed supportive services plan that outlines the specific services to be provided, approach, and evidence-based best practices and staffing, the strategies for delivering services can be broadly categorized as follows:

- **On-Site**
 - In supportive housing projects that have a significant number of supportive housing units located within the same building, it may be feasible to provide services on-site. Tenants living in buildings with on-site supportive services may access all, some or none of their services on-site, depending on the services available and their individual preferences.
- **Community-Based**
 - Tenants access services at one or more locations in the community. In this service delivery model, it is important to ensure that tenants have transportation, and any other supports they might need to successfully participate in services. This model can be used whether the supportive housing units are located in the same building or scattered throughout the community.
- **Mobile**
 - Tenants have a case manager or a team of supports (such as an Assertive Community Treatment team) who can provide services at a location of their choosing. This location could be in the tenant's home, at a community location such as a park or restaurant or at an organizational office. Mobile services generally follow the tenant, regardless of housing location and are typically used when tenants live in units of housing scattered throughout the community.