Creating Homes for People With Special Needs

A Complete Overview of the Skills and Roles Needed for Developing and Managing Supportive Housing
Launched in 1982 by Jim and Patty Rouse, The Enterprise Foundation is a national, nonprofit housing and community development organization dedicated to bringing lasting improvements to distressed communities.

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This book is part of the Enterprise Community Development Library, an invaluable reference collection for nonprofit organizations dedicated to revitalizing and reconnecting neighborhoods to mainstream America. One of many resources available through Enterprise, it offers industry-proven information in simple, easy-to-read formats. From planning to governance, fund raising to money management, and program operations to communications, the Community Development Library will help your organization succeed.

ADDITIONAL ENTERPRISE RESOURCES
The Enterprise Foundation provides nonprofit organizations with expert consultation and training as well as an extensive collection of print and online tools. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.enterprisefoundation.org.
About This Manual

What is housing for people with special needs?

_Housing for people with special needs, as addressed in this manual, is affordable rental apartments or rooms built to provide the best possible environment for individuals with HIV/AIDS, mental illnesses or other disabling conditions. The housing described here is a form of supportive housing in which services are integrated with the housing. Other types of housing for persons with special needs, including “consumer controlled housing” or “supported housing,” are not included. For more information on these types of housing, call the Consumer Controlled Housing Enterprise at The Enterprise Foundation offices in Austin, TX (512.458.3200)._

Creating Homes for People With Special Needs is designed for board members and staff of nonprofit community development organizations who are interested in supportive housing and have not participated in planning, developing or managing a successful project. This manual can make that process easier and clearer. It should be used with the more detailed information and helpful documents available in The Enterprise Foundation's Developer Support System found on the Web at www.enterprisefoundation.org. This manual covers the critical ingredients for successful supportive housing, including:

- Choice of population to be served
- Organizational aspects
- Physical design of the building
- Social service planning
- Property and asset management
- Financing and partnerships

This manual is part of the *Program Operations* series within The Enterprise Foundation's Community Development Library™. The series provides detailed information on the housing-related programs used most by nonprofit organizations. Other manuals in the series include information on:

- Single-family acquisition and rehabilitation
- Single-family subdivision new construction
- Single-family housing for infill
- Multifamily new construction
- Multifamily rental housing through renovation
- Home improvement programs
- Scattered-site rental housing
- The HOME Investment Partnership Program

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Introduction

The process of planning a supportive housing program is exciting and challenging. Nonprofit programs all over the country are meeting and overcoming those challenges.

Careful planning is the key to a successful program. Supportive housing is like any other business: It begins with a vision (concept development), requires careful market analysis (feasibility analysis) and has a distinct bottom line (outcomes). At every stage of planning, it is necessary for the program planner to stop, assess his or her progress, and decide whether the next step is to move forward or repeat a previous step. When the program is operating, it is important for program staff to analyze outcomes regularly and to determine whether the needs of clients are being met.

Help with planning, developing and operating is available through a wide range of manuals, Web sites and training sessions. Begin with The Enterprise Foundation’s Web site at www.enterprisefoundation.org. Do not be afraid to ask other, more seasoned supportive housing providers to help. Your clients will also have valuable information that may make your job easier.

This manual does not cover the process of real estate development. While as important for supportive housing as any other type of housing, real estate development is covered in other manuals in the Program Operations series of The Enterprise Foundation’s Community Development Library.

This manual is concerned with the development of supportive housing. Information about other types of housing for persons with special needs can be obtained from the Consumer Controlled Housing Enterprise at The Enterprise Foundation offices in Austin, TX (512.458.3200).

WHO IS THIS MANUAL FOR?

This manual is designed for two audiences:

- Organizations that have not developed or operated a supportive housing project. This audience will most likely include:
  - Community development organizations that want to incorporate supportive services into their existing housing work
  - Social service agencies that want to include supportive housing in their range of service
  - Organizations that are new to both supportive services and housing. If your organization has developed and managed neither affordable housing nor a social service program, you might consider developing one or the other as an initial venture. Creating housing with supportive services as your first development effort can be a huge undertaking.

- Organizations that have developed or operated one supportive housing development but now suspect that they could have been better informed and prepared before they began the development process. They may:
  - Have questions about how to make their program better
  - Want to figure out where they made mistakes
  - Want to build their organizational capacity to avoid those mistakes in the future

This manual will refer to a person who lives in a supportive housing development as applicant (before entering a supportive housing development), resident, client, consumer and customer. The manual will call supportive housing both developments and programs in recognition of their dual purposes of shelter and care.
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND OTHER AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The lines between affordable housing and supportive housing developers used to be very distinct. They are not any more because of the following reasons:

- Increasingly, affordable housing providers are making services available to their residents.
- Low-income, especially formerly homeless, residents very often need assistance getting services, regardless of who provides their housing.
- Many affordable housing developments (like other types of housing) have tenants with special needs.

Supportive housing is different from other types of affordable housing because:

- Supportive housing providers must focus on at least two lines of business: housing and services.
- Supportive housing services provided may cover a wide range, requiring many different types of expertise.
- Goals for clients may be multilevel; for example, a client may want permanent housing, employment stability and an end to periodic hospitalizations for chronic mental illness.
- For these reasons, developing and managing supportive housing requires close collaboration with many partners.
- Funding sources used to finance supportive housing may be different from the funding sources used in other types of affordable housing. In addition, providers must secure funding not only for development and building maintenance, but for social services, thus increasing the complexity of the project.
Supportive Housing Matrix

Developing and operating supportive housing is a complicated process, encompassing many stages, each with multiple issues. The matrix outlined on pages 6–9 may help you organize the process.

The matrix can help you plan new programs or review existing ones. Its purpose is to prompt program planners to consider certain questions at each point of development or operation.

COMPONENTS OF THE MATRIX

The matrix assumes that there are seven crucial components of supportive housing: population, organization, physical design and environment, social services, property and asset management, financing and partnerships. While the components are not, for the most part, listed in order of importance, population is listed first, because this is the component upon which all else should be based.

The matrix includes three of the five stages of development and operations:

Concept Development is the stage during which the nonprofit first identifies a need or develops a vision for the type of program it would like to operate. It is at this point that the group develops a number of assumptions about how that program will look and operate.

The Feasibility Analysis stage is the stage during which the group tests those assumptions by researching available data and by making contact with prospective clients and with operators of similar programs. It is during this stage that the program establishes processes for gathering and analyzing data for the purposes of self-evaluation. This is the stage most commonly overlooked by supportive housing groups.

The final stage is Operation/Implementation, during which the program is operating and the provider must constantly evaluate its effectiveness. During this stage the program must document results of its operations, make adjustments to the program if expectations have not been met, and document lessons learned, in order to establish an organizational memory and disseminate valuable information to the field.

Two of the stages in the typical real estate development process — financing and construction, both found between feasibility and operation/implementation — are not included in this matrix. The process of acquiring or constructing the physical structure is not discussed beyond the planning process because it will occur in much the same way as other housing development processes. The Enterprise Foundation has several manuals in the Community Development Library to help organizations work through the typical real estate development process.

This is not a linear planning process. An organization may develop a concept, test its assumptions and discover where they are flawed. Then it must return to the concept development stage to develop new assumptions based on the information gained. Although there are succinct steps, after each step it is necessary for the organization to look back and ask, Where are we? What have we done? How do we know we did it?

Throughout the manual, bold and italicized references (Organization/Concept Development, for example) point the reader to boxes in the matrix where related issues are addressed. Many (but not all) of the boxes are discussed further throughout this manual.

The Operation/Implementation section of the matrix is divided into three sections. The first section, Results, allows you to keep a record of your experiences during the course of operations. The second section, Adjustments, allows you to analyze results and determine how you should modify your program based on where you missed your goals or made wrong assumptions. We would suggest that you perform this...
exercise quarterly even if it seems, at first glance, that everything is going as planned. The worst that will happen is that you will find you have no adjustments to make. The best that can happen is that you will realize either that conditions are not as anticipated or that they have changed. The final section, Lessons Learned, helps you to chronicle what you would do differently next time so that your program does not make the same mistakes over and over again.

This exercise should be as regular a part of your program as any other administrative duty. It would be a good idea for the executive director to keep a notebook in which thoughts may be jotted down and saved for the quarterly (or more frequent) analysis. Other staff members either should be encouraged to add to the notebook or should keep notebooks of their own.

The process of carefully planning and analyzing one's program should not be thought of as a tedious exercise, designed simply to make your life miserable. Rather, think of the planning exercise as a form of insurance against mistakes made simply because you did not think about an issue ahead of time. Difficulties will still arise but making planning a part of your life is like taking the time to condition yourself to check any blind spots before changing lanes in your car. Accidents may still happen, but they will be far less likely.
## Supportive Housing Planning Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept Development</th>
<th>Feasibility Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Whom will we serve (physical/mental, economic background, gender, family composition, etc.)?</td>
<td>■ How many such people are there in our area with those needs? How do we know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ What do we think these clients will need (that is within the scope of supportive housing)?</td>
<td>■ Where are they located?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How does this project relate to our mission?</td>
<td>■ What role will our organization play?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Do we need to create a new program or organization?</td>
<td>■ Have we gotten buy-in from all stakeholders:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Do we have the resources:</td>
<td>– Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Administrative</td>
<td>– Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Board time/expertise</td>
<td>– Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Staff skill/expertise</td>
<td>– Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Financial/overhead costs</td>
<td>– Funding sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Program facilities/office space</td>
<td>– Government regulatory agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ What is the risk:</td>
<td>– Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Financial</td>
<td>■ Who will sit on the board of directors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Legal</td>
<td>■ What will be the organizational structure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Reputation</td>
<td>■ How can we ensure residents have an active voice on the board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Failure to accomplish project goals (organizational morale)</td>
<td>■ What do we need to do to protect our agency from legal and financial risk?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Design and Environment</strong></td>
<td>■ How often and in what areas must we provide board and staff training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How will the design or environment of our facility and program be determined by our population and their needs?</td>
<td>■ Does the design team include all stakeholders:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Individual units or congregate living</td>
<td>– Social service provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Number of units</td>
<td>– Property manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Handicapped accessible and/or special design features</td>
<td>– Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Ease of child supervision</td>
<td>– Regulatory bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Storage space</td>
<td>– Prospective clients (focus groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Common space</td>
<td>– Community representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Institutional versus residential</td>
<td>■ Can a donated building meet the needs of our clients, or should we forfeit it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Program and office space</td>
<td>■ How do we balance location and cost and still get the best possible site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Discourages concealment of drugs and contraband items</td>
<td>■ Do we need to tell our neighbors about our plans or get community support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Safe and durable furniture</td>
<td>■ What work does the existing site or building need to make it what it should be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Promotes safety of residents, staff and community members</td>
<td>■ What will it cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Access to public transportation</td>
<td>■ Can we afford to build it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Access to services, shopping</td>
<td>■ Are there other construction/zoning/site control issues affecting the site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Ease of maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Ability to withstand wear and tear, abuse (or durability of materials)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Communication with community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Operation/Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Adjustments</th>
<th>Lessons Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Whom did we serve in the last 3, 6, 9, 12 months (demographics,</td>
<td>■ What adjustments must we now make to our expectations?</td>
<td>■ What have we learned about our population?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs, barriers, etc.)?</td>
<td>■ What adjustments must we now make to our program?</td>
<td>■ What will we do differently next time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Were our clients who we thought they would be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How well have we met our expected outcomes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Adjustments</th>
<th>Lessons Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Are we in line with our mission?</td>
<td>■ What adjustments must we make to our organizational structure?</td>
<td>■ What will we do differently next time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ What has been the effect on the quality of existing programs?</td>
<td>■ Do we need to revisit our strategic plan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How well has this program integrated with existing programs and</td>
<td>■ Do we need resource development (fund raising)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures?</td>
<td>■ Is there a need for board/staff training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How do our residents feel about the building (interviews/questionnaires)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How does our staff feel about the building (interviews/questionnaires)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ How does our community feel about the building (interviews/questionnaires)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Do our work order records show durability and ease of maintenance?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Is there enough office space?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Adjustments</th>
<th>Lessons Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ How will we design our building differently next time?</td>
<td>■ What can we reasonably change about our building?</td>
<td>■ How will we design our building differently next time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Do we need to implement a plan for growth of the program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*chart continued on next page*
### Social Services
- What role will we play in the provision of services?
- What is the theory of change that drives our program?
- Who will provide the services we cannot?

### Property and Asset Management
- Should we contract out property and asset management, or should we do it ourselves?

### Financing
- How will we pay for development?
- How will we pay for services?
- How will we pay for operations/maintenance?

### Partnerships
- Who can provide the services that we cannot, or choose not to?
- Which agencies serve similar populations?
- Which agencies have cultures and philosophies similar to ours?
- What level of partnership do we desire:
  - Coordination
  - Cooperation
  - Collaboration
- What is the appropriate degree of:
  - Structure (informal to formal)
  - Duration (transient to enduring)
  - Commitment (low to high)
  - Authority (individual to collective)

### Feasibility Analysis
- How are other agencies providing services to similar clients?
- Must we be licensed?
- How much staff will we need?
- What is a reasonable caseload (based on intensity of client need)?
- What will be our policies and procedures?
- How will we measure the effectiveness of our program:
  - Who will collect data?
  - What is our documentation system?
  - How often will data be collected and analyzed?
- How do we separate the social services and property management functions?

- How do we separate the social services and property management functions?

- How will we perform preventive maintenance?

- Is there an adequate property and asset management plan that includes:
  - Marketing strategy
  - Resident selection plan/criteria
  - Rent structure/lease arrangement
  - Property maintenance
  - Financial management
  - Rent management
  - Administrative responsibilities
  - Communication and decision-making

- How do we measure the effectiveness of our program:
  - Who will collect data?
  - What is our documentation system?
  - How often will data be collected and analyzed?

- How do we separate the social services and property management functions?

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- How will we separate the social services and property management functions?

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  - Property maintenance
  - Financial management
  - Rent management
  - Administrative responsibilities
  - Communication and decision-making

- How will we separate the social services and property management functions?
**Operation/Implementation**

### Results
- Are clients' needs being met in the way we expected?
- Are we seeing the outcomes we expected?
- What do our clients think of the services?
- What does our staff think of the services?

### Adjustments
- Which areas actually need adjusting:
  - Our assumptions
  - Our expected outcomes
  - Our data collection and analysis
  - Our services
  - What else needs to be adjusted?

### Lessons Learned
- What have we learned about our own ability to provide services?
- What have we learned about service provision to this population?
- What have we learned about the changing environment?
- What will we do differently next time?

### Results
- How well is this property being managed as an asset?
- How much of the rent is being collected?
- How high is our occupancy level?
- Are our replacement reserves adequately funded?
- Are other performance indicators within the management plan being met?

### Adjustments
- What needs to be adjusted: our budget or our spending?
- How do we need to change the original budget to more accurately reflect operations?
- How do we need to retrain residents and staff to take care of the building?
- Are there other adjustments necessary in bringing operations closer to the plan, either to the management plan or to operations?

### Lessons Learned
- How could we have designed this building differently to increase ease of maintenance?
- What will we do differently next time?

### Results
- Have we managed to stay within our financial goals?
- Have we consistently funded our reserves?
- Have we had findings on our annual audits?

### Adjustments
- What other adjustments must we make?
- How much more money do we need to raise?
- How can we learn more about fund raising?

### Lessons Learned
- What have we learned about financial management?
- What will we do differently next time?

### Results
- How have we met our desired outcomes?
- Have clients been served in the way the partnership was intended to serve them?
- What do clients think of the partnership?
- What do respective staff think of the partnership?
- How well has information flowed between agencies?
- How has conflict between organizations been addressed?

### Adjustments
- What changes must we make to our partnership?
- Can we identify gaps in procedures:
  - Planning
  - Staff implementation in our own or partner agency
- Must we make adjustments to our mechanism for addressing problem/emergency situations?

### Lessons Learned
- What will we do differently next time?
- Would we choose different partners? Based on what criteria?
- Would we spend more time on planning?
- Would we set up the partnership differently? How?
The most important consideration when planning a supportive housing project is the choice of population you will serve. It is essential to get a very clear picture of the type of person who will need your housing and services and can most benefit from them, and have access to them. *(Population/Concept Development)*

The particular needs of any population will shape your building and service design. For this reason, you should consider choosing your target population to be the foundation upon which the rest of your program should be built.

Carefully think about the people who will live in your housing. You should ask the following questions.

**Will your program serve men, women or both?**

You may have made assumptions regarding the gender of the residents who will live in your program: for example, that if you serve single-parent homeless families, they will all be female-headed. In most instances that may be the case; however, occasionally a male-headed homeless family may apply to your program. Before being faced with this situation, you must make some decisions about what to do if it happens.

It is important to consider the privacy and safety of residents, even if they are all of the same gender; however, special attention should always be paid to the physical design of the building if your program will serve both men and women.

**Does your program require that residents meet some type of eligibility criteria?**

One basic assumption of a supportive housing program is that residents require services. Your eligibility criteria should include a clinical needs assessment. Your goal is to ensure a good “fit” between the services offered and the services a potential resident might need. Most supportive housing programs are designed to serve individuals and families in particular situations or with particular backgrounds, those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, victims of domestic violence, veterans, substance abusers and people with AIDS, among others.

Many donors require that your program document eligibility in one or more areas of need. For example, some donors, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), require documentation of homelessness, such as *written* referral from a homeless shelter (which should have already verified homelessness) or documentation of attempts made by the individual or service providers to secure housing.

**Is your program geared toward residents of a certain age?**

If your answer is *yes*, you may wish to specify the parameters of the eligible population carefully, as well as any exceptions that may exist. For example:

- If your program is designed to serve teen-age mothers, it will be important to specify both the upper and lower age limits of the eligible age group. Your program will need to determine on what terms applicants under the age of 18 will be accepted. Perhaps only emancipated minors will be accepted. In that case, your intake worker must be certain to document how emancipation was verified. If applicants under the age of 18 who are not emancipated will be accepted, licensing requirements may be placed on your program. Check with local authorities, such as the Department of Social Services, for guidance. You will also need to determine at what age applicants are considered too old for your program and what happens when residents currently in your program reach that age.

- If your program serves seniors, you must determine at what age your program considers applicants eligible seniors. You may choose to follow Social Security Administration guidelines, or you may set your own age limits.
If your program has an intergenerational component, attention should be paid to how clients of different ages may successfully share the same space. Some programs have designed very effective intergenerational programs, where older residents provide support and guidance to younger residents and younger residents assist older residents with day-to-day living. In other programs, older and younger residents have had difficulty sharing the same space. Successful programs are the ones that design their building so that residents have the option of spending time together or apart.

Are there limitations on size and composition of families entering your program?

- Your program or building design may require that you limit the size of families entering your program. Many programs are unable to accommodate families with three or more children. Some programs are able to count a large family as two different families, providing the building structure allows for this to be done without leaving minor children unsupervised in separate units. This setup, however, may have implications for program planning and program income, especially if each unit is expected to generate a certain amount of rent.

- Your program may require you to limit families with children of a certain sex or age. For example, some supportive housing programs for victims of domestic violence will not allow male children over the age of 13 to accompany their mothers into the facility. The belief of such programs is that this is to be a safe environment for women to begin their healing process with other women. A male adolescent in this setting may threaten the feelings of security of some of the other residents.

- Other programs, because of the physical layout of sleeping spaces, will place limitations on family composition so that opposite sex children over the age of 4 do not share the same bedroom, or opposite sex children do not share a bedroom with a parent. In the case of a program that provides families with two-bedroom apartments, a family composed of a mother and three daughters may be treated differently than a family composed of a mother and father with a daughter and a son both over the age of 4.

Must residents have a minimum or maximum income in order to enter and remain in your program?

- Many funding sources will require that residents of your program earn less than a certain level of income. This affects who may or may not enter your program. Certain funding sources, like HUD, require that any program it funds determine and document eligibility in many areas, including income. This requirement affects the program in several ways, including the use of staff time to determine and verify income during intake. Funding sources may also require that your staff periodically recertify that residents in the program meet the income requirements. This means that staff may need to verify from a variety of sources that residents’ incomes have not exceeded allowable limits.

- Operating costs may require that you charge residents of your program a certain rent or a program fee. In this case, your program may need to verify that residents have a minimum income that allows them to pay their share of housing costs. Failure to ascertain residents’ ability to pay their share of expenses may result in serious damage to your program’s economic stability.

Is your program appropriate for mentally ill residents, residents taking medications for psychiatric illnesses or current substance abusers?

If your answer is yes, there may be implications for building and program design, and certain special accommodations may be necessary. For example:
Residents taking psychotropic medications may require supervision in order to keep them stabilized. Understanding this need for additional staff is important to the safety and well-being of residents. If you are able to serve mentally ill residents, you will want to specify the limits of your program; for example, you may be able to serve residents who are regularly taking medication, but you may not be equipped to serve residents who are not stabilized and in treatment.

You will also need to determine what happens to the units if the residents are hospitalized. You might set a maximum length of time for holding units. Also important to consider is whether or not you will still be able to collect rent for the unit during that period of time.

Residents who are mentally ill and abusing substances require program staff experienced in both substance abuse and mental illness.

Substance abusers in treatment require high levels of support, including education and monitoring. Residents must be able to get services both on- and off-site as needed. Your program will need to make decisions about tolerance for drug use both inside and outside the residence.

If your answer is no, you should make certain both your staff and your referral sources are aware of the limitations of your program, and your staff should be able to refer applicants to more appropriate service providers. Once again, make certain that your guidelines are in compliance with fair housing laws.

### Is your program appropriate for residents with severe medical or physical conditions?

If your answer is yes, you will need to examine the building you plan to use and make accommodations for possible physical needs. For example:

- People with AIDS may need individual heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems to prevent the transmission of airborne diseases and to accommodate residents’ differing temperature requirements.

- Elderly residents may require hand bars on walls to assist them with walking. Residents whom you expect to age while in your program might not need bars on walls and in bathrooms upon entrance into the program but may need them later. In such cases, plans must be made for how to convert the building as elderly residents age. Residents who may easily become disoriented may require contrasting wall colors in different areas of the building or on different floors in order to help them find their way around.

- Physically disabled residents may require flashing lights as well as auditory fire alarms and doorbells. Residents may require elevators or chair lifts, roll-in showers, lowered cabinets and widened doorways.

If your answer is no, either because of program limitations or because of building restrictions, you should be very clear with your staff and your referral sources that you are unable to accommodate this type of client. Check with legal authorities to make certain you are not in violation of any fair housing laws. You might have to make a decision not to accept a particular building because it is unable to accommodate the needs of your residents, which is the most important consideration.

*It is important that all staff members, especially those doing intake, are fully aware of your program’s eligibility policies.*

With clearly written guidelines, your program is less likely to be seen as discriminatory and is also less likely to admit residents for whom the program is not well suited. In addition, intake workers may be required by funding sources to document that only eligible residents were admitted.

These policies must be applied across the board fairly and consistently to all applicants. You should train all new staff on eligibility criteria and offer refresher sessions for current staff. Staff should review resident files regularly to assure proper documentation of eligibility.
NEED (OR MARKET)

Need is one of the most important issues to consider when planning a supportive housing program. (Population/Feasibility Analysis)

The following are some questions to ask about your target population:

How many members of your target population may be found in your area? How can you verify whether they have unmet needs?

- Providers of similar programs in your service area should not have difficulty remaining full. You should ask them if they ever have to turn away applicants or if they keep a waiting list. If the answer is yes to these questions, there is probably a greater need for this type of housing than that provider alone is able to fill. If so, there may be a need for your proposed program.

- There may be information that has been compiled about the housing needs of people in your area. Ask foundations if there are any relevant studies. Information may also be available from your area’s Consolidated Plan or most recent Continuum of Care application. Talk to your local social service and housing departments to find out how much need they see for the type of housing you propose. These are also good sources of referrals, and you should begin a conversation with them at this time about a process for referring prospective clients to your program.

- Talking to members of your local Continuum of Care will also give you invaluable information about your target population’s needs. You may be surprised to discover that although the population you wish to target needs transitional housing, the need for permanent housing may be much larger. Finding out your local continuum’s identified gaps and working to fill those gaps will make it much easier for you to find funding, since HUD relies on the local continuum to assess priority needs for funding new programs.

What do the people you plan to serve or people with similar characteristics say about the needs of your target population?

It is important, at all phases of planning your supportive housing project, to talk to consumers of similar services, prospective consumers or people who are very similar to your target population. This may be done with surveys, focus groups or interviews. Another service provider may be willing to help you bring together a group of its own consumers or other people.

What can other service providers who serve similar populations tell you about this population?

Other service providers can tell about the specific needs of the clients they see. They can tell you about the length of program their clients have needed, the intensity of services their clients are comfortable with and the ways in which their clients’ needs have changed over time.

ACCESS

Other key issues include accessibility and use: Can the people who need your program get to it and will they come? (Population/Feasibility Analysis) Consider these questions:

How easy is it for people to hear about your program, contact you and get in?

- Consider where your population will come from when they enter your program. If your program targets people who live on the streets, how will word get to them that your program exists? Many people on the street will probably hear about your program by word of mouth. If so, you might want to plan to have some staff members go to the places your prospective clients frequent and give out information or tell people about the program.

The next issue to consider is how people on the street will contact you. Will they be able to walk in, or must they call first? If you have to put them on a waiting list, how will you reach them when a vacancy opens up? Some programs give applicants a toll-free number to call to check in whenever they please; however, if the person does not check in soon after a
space becomes available, he or she may lose his or her turn because of the cost to the program of keeping the space vacant. Other programs have given applicants beepers so that they may be contacted when needed, but that may be very expensive.

- If your clients will be referred by another agency, consider how long and tedious the referral process will seem to your applicant. You should work with your referral source to make certain that the referral process is as simple and short as possible without sacrificing comprehensiveness.

It is important that applicants move through the referral process with as much dignity as possible. Look carefully at procedures that may frustrate applicants and cause them to give up: Will they be given assistance in filling out application forms? How many interviews must they attend? Will they be assisted in obtaining documentation (Social Security card) or financial assistance (Social Security) if required before entering the program? Can some of the information the other agency gathered be transferred to you so that your staff does not have to ask the same questions and require the applicant to give all of the same information?

How do you know your target population will take part in the program?

- Ask potential clients — through surveys, interviews or focus groups — whether they would take part in a program like yours. If their answer is yes, ask them why and take note of what they are looking for in a supportive housing program. If their answer is no, ask them what would need to be changed for them to take part and why. Take this information seriously and incorporate it into your program planning.

- Consider accessibility issues that may not be immediately apparent. For example, find out where your target population currently receives services. Will coming into your program still allow them the opportunity to take advantage of those services? Ask whether they would feel safe in the neighborhood and whether they will still be able to reach family and friends.

Example

**Problem:** A supportive housing program was designed to serve homeless teenage mothers and elderly women. The rationale behind the design was good: The older women would provide the younger women with nurturing and support and would teach them about parenting and other life skills. The younger women and children would provide the older women with companionship and make them feel useful. Focus groups were held with the young women about the design of the building, and they gave very valuable feedback.

When the building was complete, the spaces for the young women filled up very quickly. Not one elderly woman moved in. Although an arrangement had been made for young women to be referred to the program from the local department of social services, no referral system had been arranged for the older women; it was assumed that they would find the program on their own or that an informal system of word of mouth in the community would be enough.

When a few older women applied for housing, they decided not to enter the program because they did not want to live in a congregate facility with other women, either young or old. They wanted their own space where they could put their own possessions, which they had accumulated over the years. The program was finally forced to abandon the intergenerational component.

**Solution:** Although the younger women had been consulted about what they needed in a program, no elderly women were asked whether they would take part in such an arrangement. Had there been focus groups with older women, the housing provider would probably have
discovered that the older women needed more space and privacy. Perhaps the units for the older women would have been separate and unfurnished so that they would not have to give up their possessions or place them in storage.

In addition, a referral system should have been set up for the elderly women, perhaps with the help of local hospitals, senior centers or the Department of Social Services. Even if the design of the building was not exactly what they wanted, if enough eligible applicants knew about the program, the spaces for the elderly women probably would have filled up.

**MEASURING IMPACT ON THE POPULATION SERVED**

While planning your program, it is important to keep in mind that the most important result of your program is that your clients' lives are affected in the most positive way possible. (Population/Feasibility Analysis) Another way of saying this is to ask, How will this particular program benefit the population you have chosen? For example, the goal of your program may be to provide housing for mentally ill homeless men and to assist them in achieving stability. How will you define and measure success in these two areas?

Housing is easier. You may decide that the men in your program will be considered successful in this area if they are able to remain in housing for six months or more. Stability is more difficult to define and measure. You may decide to define stability as one or more of the following:

- Remaining on prescribed medication until treatment team (including resident) decides it is no longer necessary
- Reducing number of days spent hospitalized by 50 percent over the course of one year
- Attending therapy regularly (at least twice per month) for as long as treatment team deems necessary
- Remaining drug free for at least 12 months
- Maintaining employment or remaining in job training for six months or more

Each of these indicators is concrete and measurable. Even the word “regularly” when describing use of therapy is defined. In this way, your program will be able to determine whether or not it is meeting its goals.

Determining the desired impact on the population is also important in program planning. It allows program planners to determine whether or not they have the resources to provide the services necessary for realizing the desired benefits for their clients. For example, in the planning stages of your program, after establishing the indicators of success for your participants (using the example above), you might realize that your operating budget will not allow for each participant to attend therapy twice monthly. In that case, you need either to change your goals for your program or to seek additional funding.
Organization

This section is designed to provide information on a broad range of organizational aspects of supportive housing. Some parts may address issues you have taken care of already; you will not need to read about nonprofit status, for example, if your organization is tax-exempt, nor about creating a new operation if developing and operating supportive housing is part of your organization’s mission and business.

DO WE NEED TO CREATE A NEW OPERATION?

At this point, it is safe to assume that you are thinking about either creating a new business organization or expanding a currently operating organization. In this section, you are challenged to think carefully about your decision to create or expand operations. (Organization/Concept Development) You may see an urgent need in your community, a need that is going unmet, and you may have decided to do something about it. There may be another way than creating a new business or program to meet your goal, and if so, it may be simpler to accomplish. Start by answering these questions with the help of experienced advisors who will be very honest with you:

- Are other organizations doing what you plan to do?
- Do they serve the population you want to serve?
  - Are they good at what they do?
  - Do you intend to replace them?
  - Are their clients satisfied with the services?
  - Do they make enough money to stay in business comfortably?
  - Are they well known and well respected?

If you answered yes to these questions, be prepared for competition. Competition is not just a Madison Avenue term. Once you open your doors, you will be selling your services to the same people. Your services must be at least as good as the existing services and at least as convenient. Whenever people can choose their service provider, they will choose the one they think will give them what they need. In addition, you will probably have to compete with existing, more experienced organizations for funding.

Now consider these questions:

- Can you generate enough money to maintain a viable business?
- Have you drafted a resource development strategy?
- Are you going to rely on funds other than government contracts or grants?
- Will your clients pay the cost (to you) of the services they receive?
- Have you clearly identified your target population?
- Are there enough potential customers in your target area to support a new business?
- Will you offer services for which there is active demand? (Active demand refers to goods or services that people can and will take advantage of today, rather than in the future.)

Negative answers here should make you ask whether you should create a new operation. Do not assume you will get endless government and foundation grants for your work and that the public will rush to the post office to mail you their checks when they hear about your good intentions. This is wishful thinking, not careful planning. And without the latter, you may fold nearly as quickly as you open.

Decide exactly whom you want to serve, where they are, and which services they will actually use. Miscalculations here can lead to disaster. Ask the tough questions. If you do not like the answers, outline potential solutions before you open, not after.
It is not unusual to grapple with tough questions at this stage, and this is the perfect time for creative thinking. That creativity can help you develop a successful organization or find other ways to achieve your goal. Perhaps you can help a local service provider do a better job. You could:

- Provide transportation to and from appointments for the service provider's customers.
- Offer a complimentary service to the service provider's customers in exchange for space and administrative support.
- Become an active member of the service provider's board.
- Take on the mantle of community organizer and educator, mobilizing the community to support the service provider and to use its services.
- Organize your worship community to raise money, sponsor community-awareness events and volunteer time to the service provider.

There may be dozens of ways you can help existing institutions do a better job of serving people in your community. Creating a new organization or program is only one of the ways, and one of the most difficult at that.

**NONPROFIT STATUS**

Creating a corporation, whether for profit or not, is a matter of state law, and states have nonprofit corporation laws that guide the formation of organizations with charitable purposes. After incorporating as a nonprofit organization, the typical community-based organization applies to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for exemption from federal income taxes. Some (but not all) states grant exemption from state income taxes to nonprofits with federal tax-exempt status.

**INCORPORATION**

The first stop is your state government. You will need to file the appropriate papers to incorporate your new organization, either as a for-profit or a nonprofit corporation. To incorporate, you have to file a document called articles of incorporation in most states, a charter in others. This document is a series of paragraphs describing the organization’s purpose and structure. States provide either a fill-in-the-blank form, a sample format or instructions for developing your own articles. Submit the signed articles to the designated state agency, along with the appropriate fee. If all goes well, you will receive acknowledgment by mail within several weeks.

If you plan to apply to the IRS for tax-exempt status, you will need to include provisions required by the IRS in your bylaws. For details, see IRS Publication 557, Tax-Exemption for Your Organization (Rev. May 1997).

**THE BOARD**

Every nonprofit organization is governed by a board of directors or trustees. The board serves as the organization’s “owner,” providing leadership, oversight and protection to the organization. The board must do whatever it takes to fulfill the mission and safeguard the organization’s assets. To fulfill their responsibilities, most boards hire professional staff to augment their own members’ hands-on work.

The board is legally responsible for making sure the organization is financially healthy and has sound financial management systems and practices.

**BASIC BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

- **Keep the mission in focus.** The board must always safeguard the mission, ensuring that resources are used to promote it.
- **Fund raising.** It is the board’s responsibility to ensure that the organization remains financially viable. Board members will be responsible for planning and implementing fund-raising activities, as well as soliciting funds from various sources, using their own personal and professional connections.
- **Plan for the future.** The board should be proactive in planning for the long-term stability of the organization.
- **Ensure board vitality.** Each board must also provide ways to keep the board vibrant and effective. Active and experienced board members are a crucial asset, but so are excited and dedicated newcomers. New directors often
bring a fresh perspective and new ways of looking at old challenges.

- **Link the organization and its community.**
  It is the board's responsibility to ensure strong relationships with the organization's stakeholders. After all, the board represents the organization as an owner and should look for opportunities to relate to the neighborhood, public officials, the local faith community, the media and others who have an interest in the organization's work.

- **Hire and supervise the executive director.**
  Most boards opt to hire a professional, an executive director, to carry out day-to-day organizational management. The executive director acts on the board's behalf, carrying out its policies and keeping the board informed about the organization's changing needs.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

If, after considering all these issues, you decide that you definitely want to form a new organization or program to create your new supportive housing program, the following section poses some additional issues to consider. *(Organization/Feasibility Analysis)*

Remember, the new program must be compatible with the goals outlined in your mission.

### What role will your organization play in the new project?

There are many options, and your organization may choose several:

- **Owner:** Acquires property and maintains it as an asset. Legally responsible for all issues related to property.
  - **Pros:** May maintain control over development and operation; potential financial return on investment; enhanced organizational reputation in community through a visible accomplishment; and supportive housing project may be part of a greater community development initiative.
  - **Cons:** Assumes financial risk of development and operation; failure of the project reflects directly on the owner; and poor performance of the property may damage relationship with community members and donors.

In addition, being the owner will require your organization to develop (if you don't already have) property and asset management capacity.

Many groups decide that they want to own the property in order to maintain control over the project. These groups usually enlist the services of a variety of experts, such as a developer, property manager and social service provider, in order to ensure that their project maintains a high standard of operation.

- **Developer:** Creates appropriate housing, including site selection and acquisition; compiles financial packaging; oversees design and construction; secures necessary approvals, complying with regulations, supervising contractors and members of the development team; and promotes community relations.
  - **Pros:** Greater control of development project outcomes; potential financial return on successful project; enhanced organizational reputation in community through a visible accomplishment; and control of construction jobs.
  - **Cons:** Greater financial risk; might affect the organization's ability to advocate for the community because of perceived conflict of interest; requires high skill level and greater staff resources; and may encounter turf issues with existing development entities.

Housing development is a highly specialized and complex field. In many cases organizations new to the housing field find they can be more successful by partnering with a more knowledgeable organization for their first several housing projects, rather than acting as the sole developer.

- **Property Manager:** Collects rent, manages property and prepares appropriate reports on condition and spending. Areas of management include administration, maintenance operations, personnel management, customer service, marketing and representing the needs of the owner. *(Barbara Kamanitz Holland, Successful Residential Management: The Professional’s Guide, The Institute of Real Estate Management of the National Association of Realtors, Chicago, 1995.)*
Pros: Allows greater contact with residents of program; allows direct implementation of organization’s concept of property management, including tight cooperation between the management and service functions; and allows possibility for employment of community residents.

Cons: Property management requires highly trained and specialized staff, which the organization may not be able to afford to hire; rule enforcement aspect of management may conflict with organization’s role as resident advocate; failures of any type reflect directly on the organization; property management for special needs clients is more expensive than it is for other types of housing and may drain the organization’s cash reserves; and property management is not financially feasible without a minimum number of units.

We do not recommend that new organizations manage their own properties. Instead, organizations should contract with a more experienced housing nonprofit or a professional management agency until they have more experience and a large housing portfolio.

Social Service Provider: Provides case management, support and services to clients as necessary to address resident needs and enhance resident assets. The goal of support and services is to allow residents the opportunity to live as independently as possible in their communities.

Pros: Allows greater contact with residents of program; allows organization to implement its own theory about the services necessary to impact residents’ lives; and gives an opportunity for staff to see the positive effects of their services.

Cons: Funding for social services is uncertain; service provision may be frustrating for staff because of high recidivism rate among some populations; clients may need more intensive services than the organization is able to provide; failure of clients to meet specified goals may reflect directly on the organization’s services; and role as client advocate may conflict with the rule enforcement aspect of property management.

Social service provision is another highly specialized and often duplicated field. Very often, several service providers in one area provide similar services without any of them operating at complete capacity. It’s a good idea for a new supportive housing provider, with little social service experience, to partner with other, more experienced service providers to provide services to its clients until it has been operating for a while and understands fully how to provide good case management services. Another option is to provide some of the social services yourself, and contract out others in which you do not have as much expertise or which would be too expensive to provide yourself.

When identifying your organization’s role in your new project, consider:

- Which of the above roles you have performed in the past. If you have successfully played that role in past projects, you may feel comfortable playing that role again. If not, hire others to do it the first time and learn from them.

- If you hire a staff person to do development, property management or social services, and no one in administration knows anything about those areas, how will your agency supervise that employee or know whether he or she is performing well (before there is a crisis)?

- There may be other organizations that can easily provide you with high-quality services at a lower cost (including the cost of wasted time) than you would incur if you did it yourself.

- Just because you do not assume every role now does not mean that you will not be experienced enough to assume those roles later. When you use experts, you can make it clear that you plan to take over certain duties at some point and that you want to learn as much as you possibly can in the interim.
ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

There are also several types of organizational resources that must be committed to the new project. Many resources are necessary before the first dollar of funding is found. They include:

- **Administrative.** Time and money must be allocated to plan, develop and fund the program. These costs may or may not be fully recovered by development or program fees, so your agency will need money for administrative expenses, especially before implementation.

- **Staff time/expertise.** Consider how much staff time will be needed both before the program is implemented and during operations. Make a list of all the different areas of needed expertise, such as financial management, social service planning, housing development and fund raising. Decide how your agency will secure these resources. Also consider how existing staff will contribute to the new program's development while still performing their current duties. New project development should not unduly strain the organization's existing commitments.

- **Board time/expertise.** A considerable amount of time goes into developing a new project, and it is important that the board of directors understands the level of commitment necessary. In addition, you may save a lot of money by not having to pay consultants if your board members possess some of the experience necessary to develop and operate the program.

- **Financial and overhead costs.** Consider the cost of developing your new project, including the cost of building development, and telephone, utility and rent expenses. These costs may become very high, especially if the development process is long and involved, and if the organization is already operating on a very tight budget.

ORGANIZATIONAL RISKS

Any new project includes some level of risk in several areas. Although most risk can be mitigated, it is important to understand possible areas of risk and plan for them.

- **Financial.** This is probably the most obvious type of risk. Funds received in the form of loans or grants are usually attached to a set of criteria for the program, the greatest of which is probably that the program is implemented and operated effectively. If the program falls through before implementation, or is unable to meet the goals (rent collection) set by donors after implementation, your organization may be responsible for repayment of the funds or may suffer an out-of-pocket loss of its own funds used in start-up. Although this is not a common occurrence, it is certainly possible. The most important thing to do is to test the feasibility of your plans (perhaps by having them reviewed by more experienced supportive housing providers) before accepting any money from donors or risking a large amount of your own.

- **Legal.** Several types of legal risk are involved in any type of business and some are particularly related to housing. They include failure to meet agreements made with contractors; injury to staff, residents and others; and failure to meet agreed-upon terms with donors. In supportive housing there is another type of legal liability: damage to residents caused by the provision of social services, particularly psychotherapy; referrals to other providers who may cause damage; or failure to refer residents to necessary services. It is very rare that supportive housing providers face this particular problem, but it is important to remember that agreeing to provide services to people in need has many ethical implications. For that reason, it is important that you hire experienced professionals with good performance histories in every area of your program and that your program has good insurance coverage.
Reputation. The risk always exists that something may happen in the new program to negatively affect the reputation of your organization. This may come from dissatisfied residents, staff, community members, donors or others. Sometimes this happens because of negligence on the part of the program, and sometimes the program has absolutely no control over what others say. What is important is that your agency provides high-quality services and maintains an active publicity campaign at all times.

Impact of failure on morale. This type of risk is not often considered but may have a profound impact on your organization. There is always the risk that your new program fails to accomplish its mission because of any number of factors, including errors made during the planning process or during operation. This failure may have a long-term damaging effect on staff and board morale and their willingness to take on new initiatives in the future. The biggest mistake many new agencies make is to move forward with implementation before plans have been completed, tested and retested. Although moving slowly and carefully may be frustrating, it may make the difference between life and death for the project.

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

There are several very important stakeholders who must be at the table during the planning process and who must buy into the new project. (Organization/Feasibility Analysis) They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Executive director** must implement the vision of the board and must understand and buy into it enough to carry the vision back to the staff and help them assume some ownership of it. The executive director is also responsible for relaying important information about the reality of proposed projects from the staff to the board.

- **Staff** at many levels, not just the executive director, play key roles. Of particular importance are the line staff who will actually perform the work of serving your customers. It is important that they understand the goals of the new program and give valuable input about what the program is likely to encounter on a day-to-day basis. If line staff do not believe in the program and its philosophy, they will be unable to assist in making it succeed.

- **Board members** may be persuaded to sign off on the new program without actually agreeing with it and seeing how it fits into the mission of the organization. This is a mistake. The board member who does not buy into the new project is most likely to be the board member who opposes it at every turn. It is better to iron out the disagreements and misunderstandings about the new project in the beginning, before the program is implemented.

- **Residents** are very important in the decision-making process. As discussed in the population section, valuable input may be sought from prospective residents, residents of similar programs and people similar to those whom you will serve. Residents may tell you which parts of your program will or will not work and why.

You will probably find that residents are far tougher on each other than your program ever planned to be. It would be a good idea to have an advisory committee of residents who will help sort through some of the issues. Residents may also be added to your board of directors, although you may want to institute a requirement that residents who have actually received services from your program have a waiting period after leaving the program before becoming voting members of the board of directors.
• **Community members** (neighbors) often oppose supportive housing projects. Community members are more likely to support the project if they are included in the very beginning, before any decisions are made, so that they feel as though they have been a part of the process. Even if your community strongly opposes your project initially, you might want to find one or two supportive neighbors to sit in on the planning meetings and give suggestions. Very often, these community members will give information that may lessen the anxieties of other members of the community. Community members are also valuable as members of the board of directors, and some funding sources may require that a certain number of seats on the board be set aside for members of the community.

• **Funding sources** are important stakeholders in the most literal sense. Where possible, the input of current and prospective donors should be sought.

Community members are more likely to support the project if they are included in the very beginning, before any decisions are made, so that they feel as though they have been a part of the process.

• **Partners** are as important as staff and board members during the planning process. Partners, whether they are the property managers, the social service providers or the owners of the building, will have valuable information that will help to smooth out the day-to-day operation of the program. Partners who do not buy into the program and its philosophy will have a difficult time making that program successful.

For example, a supportive housing provider may contract with a property management company that does not understand why the program does not automatically evict recovering addicts when they relapse and fail to pay their rent. In a situation like this, the property manager might create a hostile environment for the client while the program wants to work with the client to teach responsibility and better coping mechanisms. Each partner should make certain that it understands the other’s operating philosophy before beginning the partnership. This is discussed further in the Partnerships section of this manual.
Now that you have identified the population you are going to serve and decided the role you will take in the project, you can begin to think about the physical building, its design and other environmental issues. *(Physical Design and Environment/Concept Development)* Think about your population for a moment. What do you think they need in a building and environment? How will the design or environment of your facility and program be determined by your population and those needs?

The design process should incorporate the opinions of people who will use the building. This includes residents (through the same focus groups, interviews and surveys described earlier) and staff at all levels. Your funding sources will also want to review and approve the design of and materials for your building.

**Example**

**Problem:** An organization new to supportive housing decided to develop a group home for delinquent boys. This program would have to be licensed by the local Department of Social Services in order to serve children in the state system and receive reimbursement.

The group found a nice building, purchased it with funds from a foundation and applied for licensing. The building was a beautiful, old, two-story home with several bedrooms, a large porch and a large backyard. Social service space was located in the basement, and the large living room on the first floor opened onto the dining room and kitchen, creating a large space for family visitation and activities. The organization worked with a local architect to draw up plans to redesign the bedrooms so that there was enough space for the number of children it planned to serve.

To the organization’s surprise, the Department of Social Services rejected the application for licensing. The department stated that building requirements for licensing had not been met. The department required that a licensed building have a full fire-sprinkler system throughout, which the old house did not. It also required that the building be handicapped accessible in areas where family would visit. Social service space was in the basement, so that a physically disabled parent would be unable to meet privately with the social worker. In addition, the department required that space for visitation with parents be private and confidential, which the large living room was not. The cost of renovating the house to meet the requirements far exceeded the value of the building and the land.

**Solution:** Before looking for a building, the organization should have sought the advice of the Department of Social Services as well as the fire department and agencies licensed by the same agency to serve similar residents.

Design issues will vary based on population. Issues that are important to some populations are negligible to others. Here are some issues to consider:

- **Individual or congregate living?**
  - Think about whether it would be more appropriate for your clients to live in individual units, in a group-home facility or in some type of hybrid. For example, some interviews conducted with people with AIDS indicate a strong preference for independent units, even very small units, rather than congregate living, no matter how large and well-appointed the building. Reasons include the need for privacy, especially during bouts of illness, and discomfort over sharing bathrooms, given the compromised immune systems of AIDS patients. *(Reported at the Second National HIV/AIDS Housing Conference, Seattle, Washington, 1997.)*
  - On the other hand, a congregate living facility may be more appropriate for a population such as teen mothers and their children. Your program may want to provide individual bedrooms with shared living and dining areas in order to provide opportunities for supervision and learning.
- **Handicapped accessibility/special design features**
  - Some programs housing people with AIDS have developed units with separate heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems so that the risk of spreading airborne diseases, like tuberculosis, through shared vents is reduced.
  - Programs serving the elderly may color code the floors or living areas so that residents may easily find their way around. Elderly housing may also design all units so that they are easily adapted to special needs; for example, the blocking may already exist in the walls of bathrooms for the later installation of grab bars.

- **Supervision of children**
  - Programs serving families with children have found that the galley kitchen design does not lend itself well to child supervision. A better design is one that opens onto another common area, such as a living or dining room, where parents may cook and watch their children play at the same time. Other programs design units with windows looking out onto an enclosed playground, so that children are visible to the parents from inside.

- **Storage**
  - Many times, especially in transitional housing, the space provided for residents is very small. In order to allow residents to keep their belongings (which, in many cases, is everything they own), it is important to allow each unit a separate, private storage space. Some programs have locked cages in the basement, if one exists. Others have created storage space built underneath counters and beds.
  - Storage space helps keep the building tidy. If residents have places in which to store toys, toiletries and clothes, the space is less likely to appear messy, which can increase stress and feelings of displacement.

- **Program and office space**
  - As noted, the views of social service staff and administrative staff, such as bookkeepers and administrative assistants, should be included in the design process.
  - Most programs underestimate their need for program or office space. Programs often build in just enough space for the present, say one office for every current or currently projected staff member, and not enough for any future program expansion. At the very least a plan should exist for how the space may be increased, or how the current use of the space may be condensed, if needed.
  - Confidential resident files must be kept in locked filing cabinets, which should be kept in locked offices. Personnel and accounting files need the same treatment. Remember that files will continue to grow as your program continues. Consider where archives will be kept so that they may be retrieved as needed. Some funding sources may require that archives be kept on-site. Plan this space into the original design.
  - Think of all the activities that will be integrated into your program. Staff members will probably need quiet, private space to meet with clients where their conversations cannot be overheard. Private units and bedrooms are often not a good choice for these meetings. If group activities are planned, think where those activities can comfortably take place, and how much space will be needed, assuming everyone attends.

- **Concealment of drugs and contraband items**
  - Many programs that serve substance abusers and prohibit drugs in the building design the buildings to reduce the number of hiding places for drugs and other items, such as in toilet tanks or drop ceilings.
  - Programs may wish to reduce access to unsupervised areas such as roofs and alleyways, where residents may use drugs. Buildings may be designed to reduce blind spots, such as hidden corners, alcoves and spaces beneath stairways.
**Safety**

- Design is an important part of crime prevention. Think about the security needs of those using your building. Make certain that access to the building is properly controlled. Depending on the area in which your program is located, consider the amount of unsecured glass on the ground floor and access to windows from the ground. Ensure visibility from the outside to areas such as laundry and mail rooms. Consider lighting in outside walkways and parking lots. Many supportive housing programs have security systems, which may include doors, windows and motion sensors for unsecured spaces.

- Other safety needs to consider during design include child safety gates at stairways and windows, rubber treads on stairs and rubber padding on playgrounds.

**Maintenance**

- Supportive housing very often must withstand heavier wear and tear than do other types of housing. Maintenance experts can help choose materials or a building design that is more durable.

- Good design can reduce maintenance costs. In common bathrooms, for instance, drains in the floor reduce the risk of serious structural damage caused by flooding. Sinks that sit on cabinets are less likely to be separated from the wall when leaned on. Wainscoting in hallways reduces the need for frequent painting when furniture is regularly moved in and out of units.

- For ease of maintenance it is best to identify standard building materials that will be used throughout the building and in other buildings managed by the organization. This includes choosing a standard paint type and color, and standard floor tiles, faucets and light fixtures in order to eliminate the cost, time and space of searching for and stocking different building materials for repairs.

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**Example**

**Problem:** During a focus group with women about a proposed transitional housing facility for families, mothers expressed concern about the design of the building. The proposed design was one of shared apartments, where the mother and child had a private bedroom but shared living and kitchen spaces with other families. Because of the size of the apartments, the kitchen area was quite a distance away from the bedrooms. The bedrooms were close to the stairs. The mothers felt that if they left their children in the bedrooms sleeping and went to cook in the kitchen, they would be unable to hear the children cry through the closed bedroom doors. If they left the doors open, however, they feared that the toddlers would wander out of the bedroom and fall down the stairs.

**Solution:** The women proposed building the bedrooms with Dutch doors, which open at the top but may remain locked at the bottom. In this way, they could hear when their children cried, but the children would be unable to leave the room until their mothers came to get them.
COMMUNITY APPROVAL

Your agency may be required to seek community approval, depending on local laws and funding requirements, before operating a supportive housing facility in your area. This often proves to be very challenging for supportive housing providers and may make the difference between the life and death of your project. Even if community approval is not required, it should never be ignored, because living in a hostile and aggrieved community can be painful and countertherapeutic for residents.

Some practitioners say that if community approval is not necessary, supportive housing operators should proceed without contacting the community, since no one gets the privilege of choosing his or her neighbors. Other practitioners believe that supportive housing operators should approach the community before the community approaches them, to avoid accusations of secrecy and avoidance. You will have to respect both the requirements and desires of your local lawmakers and donors as well as assess what will work best in your community.

A safe middle ground may be to invite a few community members who are well connected and highly respected by others in the neighborhood to take part in some aspects of the planning of your facility. In this way, these community members will feel assured that your plans are sound and will not disrupt the neighborhood, and they will relay that information to others. Community members may be invaluable in helping you to design a sound program and often raise issues that may not occur to others outside the community.

It is often helpful as well to pay attention to how you communicate with key audiences (such as local politicians and community leaders) on a regular basis, not just when you face a crisis of opposition. Careful planning and delivery of messages about who you are and what you are about can build your reputation and place you in a better position to respond if someone, sometime, complains publicly about something you are doing.

Example

Problem: A provider of supportive housing to people with AIDS experienced extreme community opposition or NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) to one of its new projects. People in the community feared AIDS because of their lack of education about the disease. One community resident in particular raised her neighbors’ alarm. Several times neighbors picketed in front of the agency’s housing with signs reading “We’re sorry you’re dying, but don’t take us with you.”

The situation was so serious that local media falsified the new building’s location as a security measure. Neighbors also circulated petitions that were presented to the city council, complaining that the agency was operating a medical facility, which was inappropriate for the neighborhood. Later, the protesters filed code violation complaints with the city government. Many inspections were performed, costing staff valuable time.

Solution: The supportive housing agency reached out to neighbors through meetings to educate them about HIV/AIDS. Ministers, doctors and social workers presented information. The initial meetings were well attended, and once the neighbors became educated about HIV/AIDS, protests stopped. The protest leader publicly recanted her earlier messages in a televised appearance.

Community members may be invaluable in helping you to design a sound program and often raise issues that may not occur to others outside the community.
Social Services

Regardless of the role your organization has decided to play in the provision of services, much participation in the program planning process is required. If your organization will provide all or some of the services, knowledge of service planning and delivery is essential. Even if you partner with a social service agency that will provide all services, it is still in your best interest and the best interests of your clients for you to maintain oversight of service provision. Only by remaining involved in service delivery can you ensure that your clients are receiving the highest possible quality and scope of services. It is important to remember that, even if your organization does not provide services directly, you are still accountable to donors for providing your clients access to high-quality services.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Behind every program is a theory of change (also called theory of action) that is the foundation for the individual components of the program. This theory of change describes the program’s projected outcomes and the reasons why the program’s activities and structure will achieve these desired ends.

For example, the theory of change for a supportive housing facility may say that many families become homeless because they are unable to handle crisis situations and so lose their jobs. The supportive housing provider may determine that what homeless families need, in addition to permanent housing, are support systems that enable family members to secure necessary assistance quickly and easily during a crisis. These support systems may cover issues relating to employment, child care and family relationships, among others.

With a clear theory of change, the service planner is able to develop a program that provides focused support systems for families, helping them to reach their goal of maintaining permanent housing. Without this clear vision, the service provider may very well have developed a program that included many services, but not the key one — homelessness prevention services for families in crisis.

The theory of change grows out of the organization’s mission. The theory should be discussed in great detail at every level of the organization. The board, staff and consumers should understand the theory of change: the board, because they will need to approve program decisions based on it; the staff, because they must understand and agree with the theory in order to help their clients plan activities that will lead to the desired goals; the clients, because their motivation will be affected by how well they understand and believe that the activities developed in their individual case plans will lead to their desired goals.

The theory of change cannot be imposed on the organization by any one person. Board, staff and target population must have input in developing the theory of change because they will each have different but crucial perspectives of the issues involved. One of the ways to get your target population’s point of view about what it will take for them to achieve their desired goals is through focus groups and interviews, as discussed in the Population section.

The theory of change should also be reviewed regularly to determine if anything has changed, either with the outside environment, the clients or the program. If there have been significant changes in the ideas supporting your program or the environment in which those ideas evolved, then your program probably needs revision.
Example

A transitional housing program that serves homeless families may set the goal of helping families move into permanent housing within one and a half to two years of entering the program. That goal may be based on the theory that, in order for formerly homeless families to move into permanent housing, they need approximately three months of intensive support services upon entering the program and 15 to 20 months of additional training, support and stability. The theory maintains that families need three months to recover sufficiently from the trauma of homelessness before they can successfully participate in job training or other activities.

Welfare reform and work requirements may change the feasibility of this type of program, however. Families may be required to begin job training as soon as they enter the program in order to meet new timelines. Program planners should think carefully about the possible impact of this requirement on their program.

DEFINING SUCCESS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Think of a basketball game. The objective of each team is to score more goals than the other team and thus gain more points. Scoring a greater number of points than the opposing team is the definition of success. A goal is clearly defined and measurable: It is getting the ball through the opposing team’s net. Periodically, team members put their heads together and make plans for how to score more goals, either because they are losing and want to catch up, or because they are winning and want to stay ahead. Can you imagine a basketball game where no one kept score? How would teams ever know whether they were winning or losing? How could coaches and players ever come up with strategies if they could not tell where they were in the game?

Many service providers operate in the same way. They fail to determine exactly what success looks like for their program, which makes it difficult for them to determine whether they are achieving success or not. (Social Services/Concept Development) Careful service planning is one of the most crucial steps in developing a supportive housing program, and one which many service providers miss. If you do not clearly define the measurable goals for your program, you will be unable to determine when you have reached them or when you are off track. Several myths exist about service planning, and they need to be overturned. The following myths are based on M. S. Fine’s “Planning for Success: Success Is a Journey, Not a Destination.” (Forum, January 1997, No. 32.)

MYTH 1
WE DO NOT HAVE TIME TO PLAN

You cannot afford not to plan your business. Planning your social service program is like developing a budget — it is crucial and you cannot operate without it. Imagine operating without a budget. You would never know how well you were doing with your money until the end of the year, and you would leave your agency open to disaster.

Planning social services is just as important; clients should be accepted only if they have the need that your service package is designed to address. Funding sources, like any other investors, now require planning ahead. They want to know, when they give you money to serve clients, that the money is being used effectively for that purpose. In order to show them that the funds were used effectively, you will have to plan a system for measurement and evaluation of your program. Planning will allow you to know how to use resources effectively, where and how to cut back, and how to grow.

MYTH 2
WE CANNOT EVALUATE OUR SERVICES

If you do not plan to evaluate your services, you will go out of business because you will not be able to show that you have done a good job. Funding sources have to choose among many good programs. They will choose the programs that are best able to articulate their goals and
show that they have met them. You have to clearly define a bottom line for your business, whether it is to end your fiscal year in the black or to place 60 residents in permanent housing.

**MYTH 3**

WE DO NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO PLAN AND EVALUATE

Planning is not a separate activity from the rest of your program. It is an integral part of administration and should be considered in your administrative budget. Every other part of your program flows from your plan of action. Once you know what your goals are, you will determine the steps necessary to meet those goals and the resources necessary to make those steps. Thus, your plan of action determines your budget and program, including staffing and building resources. A well-written basic proposal provides a template for applying to a wide variety of funding sources without rewriting basic information every time.

**MYTH 4**

BETTER FUND RAISING MEANS WRITING MORE PROPOSALS

Better fund raising means writing *better* proposals, which requires careful planning, research and relationship building. Good proposals include evidence of having met clearly articulated goals.

**SOCIAL SERVICE PLANNING**

There are several steps to take in planning your social service program, including a needs assessment, goals, objectives and activities, and evaluation.

**Needs Assessment**

Planning your program begins with a needs assessment, similar to the needs assessment a case worker would perform for an individual. The needs assessment is the foundation upon which your program is built and gives you the information you need to develop your program in much the same way it gives you the information you need to develop an individual client intervention.

The needs assessment answers the following questions: Toward whom will the program be targeted? What are the dominant risk factors in that group? Out of your responses to these questions should come a *detailed* description of the target population and a baseline summary of the target population (a description of the population before intervention).

A good definition of the target audience describes whose behavior you are ultimately trying to affect; the specific characteristics of that audience (age, income, etc.); and the approximate size and location of the audience (a description of the community). Information for the needs assessment may be obtained through surveys and questionnaires of the target population; archival data such as consolidated plans; police reports; Department of Social Service records; and key informants such as social service providers, school personnel and political leaders.

In addition, the services to be provided must be selected carefully. An unresearched assumption that homeless families need training in parenting skills may result in program failure if the real cause of the families’ joblessness is a lack of affordable childcare.

**Example**

**Identified Need:**

Adults in Anytown Transitional Housing Program (ATHP) are mostly unemployed, lacking job skills and have poor employment records upon entrance; therefore, job training and job placement are needed. In addition, many residents of ATHP lack an understanding of essential qualities of being a good employee, such as timeliness and professional appearance.
Objective Data from Needs Assessment:

- Seventy-five percent of adult residents of ATHP are unemployed upon entrance into the program.
- Intake records show poor employment history.
- Intake records show poor skill development.
- Intake assessment records show poor self-esteem in relation to issues of employment.

Risk Factor Reduction:

- Reduce alienation and rebelliousness.
- Reduce rewards for antisocial behaviors.

Protective Factor Enhancement:

- Increase opportunities and rewards for positive involvement in the workplace.
- Increase social and self-competency skills.
- Improve communication skills.
- Increase professional and technical skills.

Program Goals

Once the needs assessment is complete, you now have the information you need to develop your program goals. Program goals answer the question: What do we intend to be the long-term, communitywide effects of the program? Out of the answer to that question should come a list of measurable goals. You may have more than one program goal, but try to keep them to a realistic and manageable number.

Here are some ABCs or basic rules to writing good program goals:

A. Define the audience whose participation you intend to impact.
B. Define the behavior you intend to impact and that you will measure.
C. Define the conditions under which that behavior will be measured.
D. Define the degree of improvement you expect to see.
E. Define the evidence that will be used to show achievement.

Example

Program Goal:

Within 12 months of entering the program, all employable adults in Anytown Transitional Housing Program will successfully complete a job training program that leads to placement in a full-time job, which they will maintain for a minimum of six months. Evidence of accomplishment will be training attendance records, trainee feedback, job assignment and job maintenance records.

Audience — employable adults in Anytown Transitional Housing Program

Behavior — will successfully complete a job training program that leads to placement in a full-time job which they will maintain for a minimum of six months

Conditions — within 12 months of entering the program

Degree — all employable adults (100 percent)

Evidence — training attendance records, trainee feedback, job assignment and job maintenance records

Program Objectives and Program Activities

Program objectives are tied to program goals and answer the question, What do we intend to be the short-term, immediate effects of the program? You should be very clear about how these intermediate outcomes lead to achievement of program goals. The ABCs applied to program goals also apply to program objectives.

Program activities are neither goals nor objectives. They are strategies and processes used to achieve goals and objectives. It is very easy to get them confused. For example, provision of case management is often described as a program goal. Case management is not a goal but an activity used to meet a particular goal for a client. Program activities are the road that take your program to its ultimate goal.
Program activities must meet three criteria:

1. They must match program goals and objectives (in other words, every program activity must support one or more objectives).
2. They must be effective in meeting the objective, or else they must be changed.
3. They must be feasible (in other words, the activity must be able to be implemented with the resources available to the program). If activities are not feasible, you must carefully reassess either your proposed activities or your program goals.

**Example**

**Objective 1:**

All employable adults will identify an area of job training in which they will participate for a nine-month period, leading to 75 percent of participants showing increased skill development in their selected area as evidenced by graduation from the program, test results and participant feedback.

**Activities:**

- Implement the classroom-training components of selected areas of expertise.
- Participate in on-site training experiences.

**Objective 2:**

Employment staff will identify and contact prospective employers to obtain commitments of job positions for no less than 75 percent of participating trainees by September 2000.

**Activities:**

- Research and list employer contacts to be pursued.
- Set and implement schedule to contact prospective employers.
- Follow up with employers to confirm logistics.

**Objective 3:**

ATHP will provide ongoing employment mentoring to all employed participants for a minimum of six months, resulting in 60 percent of program participants maintaining employment for a minimum of six months as evidenced by employment records and mentor contact records.

**Activities:**

- Implement the mentoring program, a component of the ATHP job training program.
- Monitor employment and mentor contact records.

**Program Evaluation and Reporting**

Once your program is operating, it is important to continually answer the question: How effective is the program? You should be able to report on long-term impacts of the program; short-term outcomes; and efficiency of program implementation (process). This process is crucial to your ability to show your donors, clients and staff that you have effectively made use of your resources to positively impact the lives of your clients.

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Effective property and asset management is crucial to the success of any type of housing, and supportive housing is no different. Managing supportive housing, however, is more involved than managing other types of mainstream or even low-income housing because supportive housing brings with it a whole range of additional issues. (Property and Asset Management/Concept Development)

WHAT MAKES MANAGING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING DIFFERENT?

- **Double bottom line.** Managing supportive housing requires that program operators meet both financial and social service objectives at the same time. This is often difficult to coordinate, especially if the expertise of the organization rests in one particular area.

- **More lines of communication to maintain.** Supportive housing programs, unlike conventional housing programs, may involve many different entities. For example, a supportive housing program may have a separate building owner, program operator, many different supportive service providers and a property management entity in addition to residents. Each of these parties has its own goals for its participation in the program, and each holds vital pieces of information that may or may not need to be relayed to any of the others involved.

- **Resident orientation.** Residents of supportive housing programs often require a more intensive orientation process, which may involve providing residents with information regarding ongoing certification of eligibility, program rules and requirements, use of apartment amenities, and service participation as well as repair and maintenance services.

- **Additional maintenance.** Because supportive housing residents may spend more of their time at home than residents of other types of housing, their living spaces may experience additional wear and tear and may incur increased utility costs. In addition, some supportive housing residents, especially those who are mentally ill or those who have become accustomed to living in substandard housing, may fail to report maintenance problems until they reach crisis proportions. It is important for management to conduct regular, planned inspections of the units.

- **Government reporting.** Supportive housing programs may be required to report regularly to a variety of entities, including licensing authorities and donors, on any number of issues related to operation. Often, reporting times for different authorities do not coincide and may take completely different formats, requiring careful planning and data collection.

- **Community spaces.** Often supportive housing programs include community space designed for the use of the residents either individually or as part of the program. These community spaces, unlike individual units, usually do not generate income but do incur expenses such as utility, repair and maintenance costs. In addition to the expense of community spaces, procedures must be developed regarding their use and upkeep.

- **Sensitivity to maintenance issues.** Managers of supportive housing must understand that some supportive housing residents, especially those who have been homeless or who are mentally ill, may be very sensitive to issues related to their living spaces. Property managers need to respond to resident concerns with empathy and concern, while still balancing their need to manage the property effectively.

- **Higher turnover.** Supportive housing programs often experience high turnover, resulting in increased maintenance costs and vacancy loss. Often turnover may be reduced by providing comprehensive social services with a component that seeks to prevent crises in residents’ lives, but in many cases, high turnover is unavoidable.

- **Addenda to leases.** Supportive housing programs may have requirements regarding participation in social services, which may be attached to the lease as an addendum. A resident’s failure to live up to this section of the lease may be treated in much the same
manner as failing to pay rent. Property managers, therefore, may find themselves affected by matters that are not traditionally management related.

Management Versus Services

When property management and social service duties are performed by the same person in some supportive housing programs, there exists a noticeable tension between the two. This tension sometimes causes a conflict of interest for the person who must perform both tasks. In addition to resident quality of life, the property manager is concerned with maintaining the building in optimum condition. While the dual roles are not impossible to navigate, the person in this position must be skillful in distinguishing between the individual goals of the client and the organizational needs for efficient property management and rigorous rent collection. It is best that the functions be kept separate whenever possible.

TO MANAGE OR NOT TO MANAGE?

Many supportive housing providers find themselves in the position of having to decide whether they should manage their properties themselves or find a professional property management company or another nonprofit to manage for them. (Property and Asset Management/Feasibility Analysis)

Reasons the Organization Should Manage

- **To ensure quality of life for high-needs residents.** Many professional property management companies are not accustomed to serving people with special needs and so may not understand the complex and diverse needs of your population. You may decide that you want to manage the property yourself in order to ensure that your residents receive high-quality services from sensitive and trained staff.

- **To implement your individual concept of property management directly.** Your agency may have a particular philosophy regarding property management. For example, your program may be predicated on a belief that residents should perform some maintenance as part of a training program. This practice may not be compatible with a professional management company’s method of managing the property.

- **For closer contact with community.** You may wish to allay some of the fears of community members regarding how your program will be run and the impact it will have on their community and property values. You may want to be able to assure community members that your agency will personally manage the property, rather than contracting it out to a company that has no stake in the community.

- **To employ community residents.** You may decide that you will employ community residents to perform property management services. This is a good way to keep money in the community, to give community residents some ownership of the program, and to show goodwill.

Reasons To Contract Out for Property Management

- **An insufficient number of units.** As discussed above, many experts believe that you should have a minimum of 500 units in order to make managing your property yourself cost-effective.

- **To avoid role conflicts.** The property manager’s focus is often on making certain that clients maintain the property and pay the rent, which creates a relationship between manager and resident that is distinct from that between service provider and client. You might want to have someone else manage the property so that you can focus on your relationship with your clients as service provider.

- **To maintain a charitable image.** Sometimes property managers must evict residents for damaging property or for nonpayment of rent. You may not want to have such actions associated directly with your agency, and so might want to have someone else perform those unpleasant but necessary duties. Even if the basic day-to-day responsibilities remain with the management company, however, your organization is ultimately responsible for the management of your property and must support the management company in executing its duties and upholding your rules.
- **Management might not be in your mission.** Property management is a specialized business that requires a certain level of expertise. Your expertise may be in social services, and the mission of your agency may be to provide high-quality services to needy individuals and families. It may not be in your mission to collect rent and manage physical assets, although those things must be done. In the same way you would not want a property management company to provide social services, you may have no desire to manage the property.

- **Lack of experience.** You may want to manage your own property but never have done so before. In this case, it is a good idea to contract out with a good management company that will manage the property for a while. After your staff has learned enough about property management, your agency might decide to take over some or all aspects of management.

- **Complicated reporting requirements.** With the large number of different funding sources often used to finance supportive housing programs, reporting to donors may be very complicated and, in some cases, may require a staff position dedicated to reporting. You might not have the data collection and analysis resources necessary to meet the reporting requirements adequately, especially in the case of developments funded in part through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

- **Your donors might require it.** Some funding sources, particularly those whose funds are secured by the property, will not allow you to manage your own property (unless you are very experienced) and will require that you retain a professional management company.
Financing

A variety of local and federal resources are available to finance the development and operation of your supportive housing program. Most of the programs listed below are administered by HUD. The direct HUD phone numbers are accurate as of press time. If you experience problems, call HUD’s Program Information Center at 202.708.1420 for a more recent referral. Or you may contact your local HUD office or search the HUD Web site (www.hud.gov) for more information.

SECTION 202 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

Eligible Applicants: Private nonprofits and consumer cooperatives in which ownership rests with a single-purpose, single-asset corporation.

Program Description: Provides upfront capital and rent subsidies for very low income (50 percent of median and below) elderly (age 62+). Residents pay the higher of 30 percent of adjusted gross income or 10 percent of income or welfare housing allowance; HUD pays the difference. Typically takes two to four years to develop and requires extensive paperwork and negotiations.

Contact: 202.708.2866, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.

SECTION 811 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THE DISABLED

Eligible Applicants: Private nonprofits and consumer cooperatives and unincorporated nonprofits.

Program Description: Provides capital grants for acquisition and rehabilitation (or acquisition alone for group homes) and 20-year renewable rental assistance to housing for people with disabilities. Up to 15 people in a group home and 24 people in an independent living facility. As with the 202 program (of which this program was originally a part), it typically takes two to four years to develop and requires extensive paperwork and negotiations. This program is administered by HUD.

Contact: 202.708.2866, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Eligible Applicants: For-profit and nonprofit developers and housing providers. Priority given to Community Housing Development Organizations.

Program Description: Block grant provided to eligible cities and states to increase affordable housing for low-income individuals and families based on strategies articulated in Consolidated Plans. Assistance can be in the form of loans, grants, equity, interest subsidies, loan guarantees (up to 20 percent of principal balance) or rent subsidies provided by state and local governments.

Contact: 202.708.2470, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS (HOPWA)/COMPETITIVE

Eligible Applicants: States, local government and nonprofit organizations.

Program Description: Assistance for housing for low-income people with HIV/AIDS and their families. Financing can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction; tenant- and project-based rent subsidies; emergency assistance; support services; and other related activities. Special set-aside for multiple diagnosed initiatives. This program is administered by HUD.

Contact: HUD’s Office of HIV/AIDS Housing at 202.708.1934, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS (HOPWA)/BLOCK GRANT

Eligible Applicants: Service providers for people with AIDS.

Program Description: Financing for acquisition, rehabilitation and construction of housing; rent subsidies; services; and other related uses to assist people with HIV/AIDS to find and remain in decent affordable housing. This program is administered by HUD.

Contact: HUD’s Office of HIV/AIDS Housing at 202.708.1934, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT/SECTION 108/EDI

Eligible Applicants: For-profit and non-profit developers/service providers and government agencies.

Program Description: Block grant administered by state and local governments to assist in redeveloping distressed neighborhoods (a majority of residents below 80 percent of median income and targeted by block grant recipient) and providing services to low- and moderate-income residents. High percentage to economic and housing development.

Contact: 202.708.1871, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.

HOMELESS SUPERNOFA

Eligible Applicants: Nonprofit agencies, public housing authorities, government agencies.

Program Description:

- Supportive Housing Program (SHP): Grants of up to $400,000 in matching (one-to-one) construction funds. Also can provide 100 percent of social service funding for three years, 75 percent of operating costs in years one and two, and 50 percent of operating costs in year three for transitional housing and permanent housing for the homeless and disabled.

- Shelter Plus Care (S+C): Five-year sponsor-, tenant- or project-based rent subsidies up to fair market rent (10-year, if project based in conjunction with rehabilitation of $3,000+/unit) for homeless disabled people.

- Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation: Ten-year project-based rental assistance for homeless singles. This program is administered by HUD.

Contact: Supportive Housing: 202.708.2140. Shelter Plus Care: 202.708.1234 or your local HUD field office or www.hud.gov.

EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT (ESG)

Eligible Applicants: Nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

Program Description: Block grant administered by state and localities to assist homeless prevention efforts and to improve and augment homeless shelters and services.

Contact: 202.708.1226, or your local HUD field office, or www.hud.gov.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS YOUTH (TLP)

Eligible Applicants: State and local governments and nonprofit agencies.

Program Description: Assists homeless youth, 16–21 years old, to make transition to independent living in up-to-18-month residential programs. This program is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Contact: The Family and Youth Services Bureau at 888.644.3397; or the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth at 301.608.8098 or www.ncfy.com; or DHHS at www.os.dhhs.gov.
BASIC CENTER FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

Eligible Applicants: State and local government and nonprofit agencies.

Program Description: Establishes and strengthens locally controlled centers to address the immediate needs (outreach, shelter, food, clothing, counseling, after care) of runaway and homeless youth and their families. This program is administered by DHHS.

Contact: DHHS at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs.htm

LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (LIHTC)

Eligible Applicants: Affordable housing developers, typically limited partnerships or limited liability corporations. Preference or set-aside for nonprofit developer involvement.

Program Description: Provides 10 years of federal income tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation or new construction of housing units affordable to households earning under 60 percent of median income. Typically private investors, who become “partners” in the project, purchase the credits and provide up-front equity. This program is administered by states.

Contact: Your state Housing Financing Agency

HUD SINGLE-FAMILY DISPOSITION PROGRAM

Eligible Applicants: Government and nonprofit agencies for lease and sale program; nonprofit agencies for lease-to-purchase program.

Program Description:

- Leasing Program: Up to 10 percent of HUD-held single-family (1–4 units) houses can be leased by homeless programs for $1/year for up to five years with an option to purchase.
- Sale Program: Properties can be purchased at 10 percent discount (30 percent discount in revitalization areas).

Contact: Your local HUD field office

PROJECTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN TRANSITION FROM HOMELESSNESS (PATH)

Eligible Applicants: States receive funds as block grants.

Program Description: Block grant to states to assist in designing care for the homeless with mental disabilities. States then distribute to nonprofit housing providers at their discretion.

Contact: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; or www.samhsa.gov

HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

Eligible Applicants: States, localities and nonprofit agencies.

Program Description: Improves health care for homeless, including mental health and substance abuse services. Five-year grant program to create comprehensive referral and delivery system. New applications limited to annual increase. This program is administered by DHHS.

Contact: Health Care for the Homeless Program Office at 301.594-4430, or www.os.dhhs.gov.
Partnerships

In previous sections of the manual, we discussed choosing a role for your organization in the supportive housing program. Most supportive housing programs realize that they are unable to provide all of the services their clients need. In those cases, supportive housing providers often create partnerships with other service providers to meet the needs of their clients in a comprehensive manner.

Successful partnerships can improve the provision of services by:

- Ensuring that services are coordinated
- Effectively utilizing existing community resources
- Ensuring that services are not fragmented or dropped because of lack of follow-through

Partnerships can also offer financial advantages by:

- Avoiding duplication of effort
- Reducing common overhead expenses
- Sharing expenses for early-stage program development — planning, research, training

The success of partnerships is not a matter of luck. Successful collaboration requires a substantial commitment to planning and negotiation at the start of a partnership and to communication during the course of the partnership. (Partnerships/Concept Development) During the planning process, it may become apparent that you have different needs and expectations and that collaboration is not possible.


- **Mutual respect, understanding and trust.** Members of the collaborative group share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations: how they operate, their cultural norms and values, limitations and expectations. Take the time to discuss vision and mission of each organization in the collaborative group.

- **Appropriate cross-section of members.** The collaborative group includes representatives from each segment of the community that will be affected by its activities, including consumers and staff at many different levels. These representatives, moreover, should be authorized by the organizations they represent to make routine decisions on behalf of the organization (this facilitates the practical work of the collaborative).

  Make joint decisions about who needs to be involved and why, within a larger agreement that all relevant stakeholders and consumers be considered and represented during the planning stage.

- **Open and frequent communication.** Collaborative group members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly, and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group. This communication may occur in a variety of ways, but it is planned and regular.

  Decide early in the process how the group will communicate, make decisions and resolve conflicts that arise.

- **Sufficient funds.** The collaborative group has an adequate, consistent financial base to support its operations. This includes both the funding needed to carry out the collaborative effort, as well as that needed to support the planning and review activities of the collaborative group itself.

  As feasibility issues are pursued, funding issues will come up. It is important to share these issues openly in order to foster feelings of equality and inclusiveness.
- **Skilled convener.** The individual who convenes the collaborative group has organizing and interpersonal skills and carries out the role with fairness. He or she may also have sufficient stature in the community to be free of any suggestion of bias toward a specific member of the collaborative group. Because of these qualities (and others), the convener has the authority to lead the collaborative venture in a productive and timely way.

Finding a skilled convener is critical. This person must have good process skills, perceived legitimacy and knowledge of the subject.

As you work cooperatively toward your goals, you should be able to assess whether the partnership is feasible or not.

**EVALUATING YOUR PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS**

Many times it is impossible to think of all the possible contingencies. Unforeseen circumstances are easier to resolve if you have developed a process to evaluate progress. *(Partnerships/Feasibility Analysis)* Ongoing evaluation of your partnership relationship is as important as the ongoing evaluation of the partnership’s success at meeting the stated goals of its clients.

The best method of evaluating partnership relationships is for the partners — typically, supportive housing operator and social service providers — to agree on:

- Well-defined goals
- Objectives in meeting those goals
- Measures of progress in attaining the objectives

What follows is one example of evaluating partnership relationships that was developed between a housing operator and social service provider:

**Example:**

**GOAL: TO DEVELOP MUTUAL RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST BETWEEN PARTNERS**

**Objectives**

- Partners will meet regularly to share information and plan strategies.
- Partners will work together to develop problem-solving processes.
- Partners will take part in surveys about the collaborative relationship.

**Measures of Progress**

- Partners conducted monthly meetings to discuss client needs and to resolve conflicts.
- Partners met quarterly to celebrate successes.
- Partners conducted semiannual retreats where strategic planning took place.
- During a survey, partners reported greater understanding of each other’s organizational cultures.

**GOAL: TO INCLUDE AN APPROPRIATE CROSS-SECTION OF MEMBERS IN THE PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP**

**Objectives**

- All staff, at all levels, from all partners, will meet for planning sessions at the start of and at appropriate times throughout the relationship.
- Feedback will be solicited from staff at all levels, consumers and other stakeholders.

**Measures of Progress**

- All staff took part in semiannual planning retreat and barbecue.
- As a result of the planning meeting, staff from each partner knew which staff members to contact to address certain problems, reducing solution time.
- Staff and consumers reported in surveys and interviews that the partnership was successful.
GOAL: TO MAINTAIN OPEN AND FREQUENT COMMUNICATIONS

Objectives

- Partners will agree on format to document services provided.
- Partners will develop and maintain formal and informal methods of communication.

Measures of Progress

- Partners worked together to develop documents that measured and reported milestones set by each partner’s donors.
- Staff from each agency worked together between monthly meetings to solve a problem regarding insufficient referral information which, if left unsolved until the meeting, would have resulted in poor services to clients.
THE ENTERPRISE FOUNDATION

The Foundation’s mission is to see that all low-income people in the United States have access to fit and affordable housing and an opportunity to move out of poverty and into the mainstream of American life. To achieve that mission, we strive to:

■ Build a national community revitalization movement.

■ Demonstrate what is possible in low-income communities.

■ Communicate and advocate what works in community development.

As the nation’s leader in community development, Enterprise cultivates, collects and disseminates expertise and resources to help communities across America successfully improve the quality of life for low-income people.

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