

Sunflower House: Self-Governed Permanent Housing and Services for Women with Histories of Incarceration

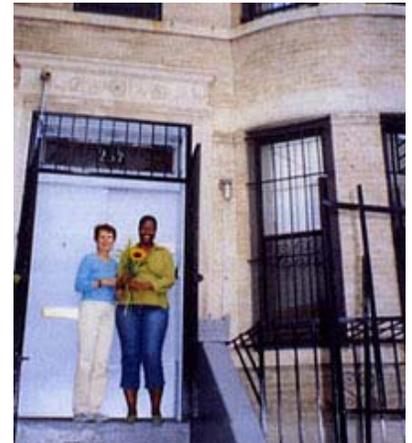
Housing + Solutions

MODEL

Sunflower House is affordable, self-governed permanent sober housing for employed women with histories of substance abuse but in recovery and who have been incarcerated or involved with the criminal justice system. Sunflower House is developed in a partnership between Housing + Solutions, and Women's Prison Association to help during the development stage and continue providing the ongoing service needs that the women and families require.

Acquired through a long-term net lease, Sunflower House, located in East New York, houses eight women who must pay rent, maintain sobriety and employment, and share in managing the house.

Sunflower House for eight women has been open since July 2004. Three additional houses for women and for families are in development and will be ready for occupancy by May 2005.



TARGETED TENANCY

Population: Women and families. No age restriction. Any offender.

Tenants are required to:

- either work or have a source of income to pay their share of the rent
- agree to participate in the Tenant Council that is responsible for house management. Staff from Housing + Solutions and the partner agency assist tenants in developing a tenant council and a structure for managing the house and paying bills. They remain available for consultation and support at the request of the tenants.
- expected to help identify and interview new tenants.

Residents are encouraged to seek social services in the community and participate in neighborhood community service projects while they cultivate positive lasting friendships and form supportive networks through living together.

SERVICES

Supportive services include:

- household management and budgeting training
- help with setting up the Tenant Council that has the responsibility for managing the house.

Tenants who need ongoing counseling, educational, or other services will be assisted through linkages in the community. Most tenants will already be linked to a service provider

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

- Provides affordable permanent housing with supports to low-income women with histories of incarceration and substance abuse
- 100% of tenants are committed to live in alcohol and drug free housing
- Tenant self-managed
- Family reunification
- Self-help and peer support community

SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Total renovations cost of approximately \$80,000
- Predevelopment/start-up costs for staff to set up household training for tenants, attend house meetings and provide support are approximately \$15,000 for the first year.
- Operating cost comprised of monthly rent and utilities of approximately \$2000
- Services are not funded as part of Sunflower House. Residents may use agency services, funded by a range of government and private sources.



HOUSING + SOLUTIONS

Housing + Solutions' goal is to create permanent affordable housing for women with a history in the criminal justice system, and who are in recovery from substance abuse.

The program, although loosely structured, will have clearly defined rules of eligibility, participation and governance. The goal is for women to live in stable, affordable, safe housing and develop positive, lasting friendships and support networks.

Participants will sign a residence agreement, acknowledging that residency is based on paying rent, continued abstinence, and participation in managing the house. Each tenant must agree to complete a course in household management -- covering such topics as financial literacy, budgeting, building maintenance and house governance -- which will be offered periodically for new residents.

Women with health, family reunification needs, counseling or social service needs will be referred to community resources and agencies with which we have an ongoing relationship.

Housing + Solutions

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