



# MOVING BEYOND STABILITY

The Road Forward for CSH and Supportive Housing

2013-2015 Strategic Plan

[csh.org](http://csh.org)



*CSH's mission is to advance solutions that use housing as a platform for services to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, maximize public resources and build healthy communities.*

*Supportive housing works. When CSH began two decades ago, we set out to prove that is true. We started learning and lending, training and collaborating, analyzing and advocating — everything we needed to do to demonstrate supportive housing's enormous potential for improving lives of chronically homeless people.*

*We used research and data to learn about who is most helped by supportive housing and launched on-the-ground programs to determine how supportive housing programs work. We forged partnerships at every level to share what we learned and to discover even more. We were ambitious. We were successful. Today, supportive housing is embedded into the nation's response to homelessness. There are over 230,000 people living in supportive housing and chronic homelessness has reduced by 30%.*

*CSH is proud of our legacy. We've presented nearly 550 training events in the past two years alone, we've made over \$330 million in loans and grants, and we're working in 31 states across three regions of the country. Over the past 20 years, CSH has built the supportive housing industry.*

*Now it's time to look forward. We ask ourselves: how do we expand supportive housing so that it serves more of the people who need it most? How do we engage a broader set of communities and public systems? How do we guide the field toward new innovations and creative solutions? How do we bring everything that CSH has learned and achieved until today to advance supportive housing to its next level? This plan is our answer to those questions. It is our way forward.*

*Collaborative Strategic Accountable*  
*Dedicated Entrepreneurial Pragmatic*

# *“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”*

–Peter Drucker, *Social Ecologist*

## **Introduction**

CSH is setting our sights on a new future for our organization, our industry and the people who live in supportive housing. Over the past two decades, we’ve learned that homelessness is not just the result of poverty, but also is a symptom of other challenges. It’s an effect, caused by multiple, co-occurring problems like sickness, substance use, mental illness and other chronic health issues. That’s why CSH is looking beyond homelessness as we envision the future for supportive housing. It’s time to address the root problems that create turmoil in the lives of the most vulnerable people among us, and CSH is poised to lead the supportive housing field in that new direction.

To be successful in that transition over the next several years, supportive housing must advance with great, innovative leaps. So much has changed in the past years: the Affordable Care Act increased Medicaid eligibility among the people we serve; the economic recession dramatically drained government affordable housing funds; and states have begun to engage around the integration mandate in the Olmstead decision. In response to these and other significant shifts, supportive housing must evolve. We need to target those who need supportive housing most while removing barriers that prevent access for those in greatest need, and integrate supportive housing more deeply into communities. We have to move beyond bricks and mortar, turning an experienced eye to all the aspects of supportive housing solutions that build up lives and make communities strong.

It’s no longer just about introducing supportive housing to communities — CSH is ready to use supportive housing to solve some of the most complex and costly social problems our country faces. For communities searching for smarter ways of addressing problems related to homelessness, CSH is an invaluable partner. Our work touches every part of supportive housing solutions, from idea to implementation. We built this industry and we will help create its future.

On the following pages, you’ll find our priorities for the next three years. These priorities will guide us as we engage vital public systems like health care, public housing, addiction services, veterans affairs, workforce services, criminal justice and child welfare to adopt supportive housing as the scaffolding for improving their system responses to their most vulnerable clientele. We’re going to skill up around these new sectors and continue to expand our geographic footprint to ensure supportive housing reaches more of the people and communities whose need is greatest. In this time of diminishing resources, supportive housing resonates because it is cost-effective for communities. We will drive that efficiency even further by exploring innovative funding models like social impact bonds. We will continue to develop new financial products and strategic housing/service models that expand access to a broad range of supportive housing solutions. We’ll also double our efforts to share our tools and knowledge virtually, using more advanced technologies so that every part of the industry meets the highest level of quality.

We're setting the bar high for ourselves, and this plan defines the path for us to achieve the priorities we've set. We've developed a new diversified revenue model that will ensure that CSH continues to thrive financially. CSH has always valued our dynamic partnerships with foundations and corporate funders, and we will engage with philanthropic entities even more deeply moving forward. We're also making strategic advancements in our lending and consulting businesses so that they drive change while also generating the revenue CSH needs to remain strong.

Over the next three years, CSH will also make advancements in the way we work each day. Grounded in thorough internal research and HR best practices, our human capital plan is designed to keep CSH on the cutting edge. We will hone our skills and aptitude working with advanced business systems and tools to maximize efficiency and accuracy in our daily administration. We'll target and recruit the industry's brightest to make sure we have the necessary skills and knowledge to address all our strategic priorities. And we'll continue to celebrate and develop our existing team, creating an environment for staff to leverage their strengths toward the success of CSH and supportive housing.

For the men, women and children trapped in crisis and at risk of homelessness, supportive housing is a proven solution. It is a cost-effective intervention that uses housing as a platform for health, hope and stability for the most vulnerable people. CSH is committed to elevating supportive housing to a new level of innovation and excellence over the next three years. We invite all of our allies, friends and partners to join us.

*Collaborative* *Dedicated*  
*Strategic* *Entrepreneurial*  
*Accountable*  
*Pragmatic*

## How We Drive Impact

***CSH makes a measurable difference using six key strategies.***



### ***Innovate, measure and evaluate smart solutions***

CSH develops and evaluates new models and demonstration programs that uncover innovative, data-driven methods to make supportive housing work better for more people — especially the highest-cost, highest-need people. We measure outcomes and evaluate impact so our work (and the industry's best practices) are grounded in research.

### ***Engage and influence policy and decision makers***

CSH builds relationships within federal, state and local governments to increase understanding and backing of supportive housing. We advocate for comprehensive policy and programs that help very vulnerable people receive the coordinated services they need.

### ***Reform and improve government systems***

CSH transforms how public agencies tackle complex and costly problems by coordinating targeted supportive housing solutions. We work with communities to shift public resources in a way that lightens the burden on systems, reduces public costs and improves outcomes for the people most in need.

### ***Fund new projects and programs***

CSH infuses projects and initiatives that include supportive housing with funding that drives expansion and progress. Our financial support ensures a diverse set of supportive housing options and encourages the use of cutting-edge financing models and architectural design.

### ***Educate and empower industry players***

CSH's best practices, tools and trainings build the capacity of the industry. With our Dimensions of Quality leading the way, we help ensure that more communities are able to create and operate high-quality supportive housing.

### ***Lead and expand the supportive housing industry***

CSH is leading the supportive housing industry into a strong and sustainable future. We shape the national supportive housing agenda and encourage growth in our field by making connections between supportive housing and the issues that matter to people, governments and communities.

## How We Create Value

*Our unique approach lets us create value where others can't. We are:*



### *We Are Entrepreneurial*

At CSH, we are creators and innovators. We take considered risks and can adapt to work in virtually any situation. We are fearless. We see opportunities where others don't, and we're always looking for new ways to solve old problems. We can redirect our efforts if it means smarter solutions and better lives in communities.

### *We Are Strategic*

CSH knows how to make decisions that deliver results. We assess each situation, identify problems and devise a plan of action. We work toward a clear solution with measured results, and we know how to find the right partners to help us achieve. We learn from successes and failures, and always stay keenly focused on what's important.

### *We Are Pragmatic*

CSH is here to get the job done. We understand the realities of complex situations and we see all sides of the story. We are not bound by theory, but driven by what works for the communities and people who need supportive housing. Our work is grounded in data, but we also learn by doing. We approach projects with persistence, working until we find the right solution.

### *We Are Collaborative*

CSH isn't in this alone. We're part of a diverse and growing coalition of individuals, institutions, governments and organizations that play a vital role in making communities healthy and strong. CSH approaches all our relationships with genuine respect and open collaboration that allows us to bring teams together to make progress and improve lives.

### *We Are Accountable*

CSH is an organization to count on. Our work is evidence-based and research-backed, and we track our progress with thoughtful metrics. We're a performance-based organization, ever-mindful to be wise stewards of public and private resources. We tackle complex issues that others won't approach, and we're determined to generate results for the most vulnerable people and the communities in which they live.

### *We Are Dedicated*

We believe in supportive housing. Residents become healthy and whole, and communities grow stronger. Those transformations inspire us and allow us to inspire others. After two decades dedicated to supportive housing, we know that broken systems can be made efficient and that struggling people can find hope. Our passion for our work is palpable. It unifies us and empowers us to succeed.

## Strategic Priorities

Over the course of this strategic plan, CSH will direct our efforts toward a unified vision of the future. In 2016, CSH expects to be leading an industry that is robust, diverse and innovative. Supportive housing will be available in a wide range of shapes and sizes, with many housing types and service approaches brought together in a way that best serve individual supportive housing residents. Supportive housing will be fluid and agile, working within and between a variety of systems and for a variety of individuals and families. Supportive housing professionals will have ready access to the very latest best practices, and the programs they implement where they work will meet the highest quality standards. CSH will continue to be a visionary in our field, bringing expertise and capital to initiatives across the country. We will be a performance-driven organization staffed by a skilled team of accountable professionals who represent the best of CSH every day.

Over the next three years, the following priorities will guide CSH toward achieving this vision. They will be a touchstone for our decisions, a tool for our tactical planning and a framework for measureable results. By keeping these front and center in all our work, we will see the progress needed to sustain and advance our organization and the field of supportive housing.

### **Priority:** *Lead the Supportive Housing Industry Beyond Housing Stability*

CSH will build on our legacy of leadership by fueling the case for supportive housing solutions and forging connections between public systems, policymakers and community stakeholders. We believe that supportive housing should focus on tenants above all, offering them opportunities for recovery, personal growth and lifelong success. We'll focus thought leadership to drive innovation, encourage growth and increase understanding of supportive housing and the populations it serves and use supportive housing to deliver and more responsive services and systems. We'll collaborate with partners and colleagues, listening to their needs and perspectives so we can seize opportunities, address challenges and meet the emerging needs over the next several years together.

- ***Elevate understanding and expertise around tenant-focused programs*** that address individual health and recovery, personal growth and achievement, and community-wide benefits with a special focus on employment and addictive services.
- ***Foster policy, administrative and systems reforms that build new ways for public systems to serve very vulnerable people*** through creative and collaborative solutions that integrate supportive housing.
- ***Lead an industry-wide agenda that elevates tenant outcomes, highlights innovation and collaboration, and tells supportive housing's story*** through focused thought leadership, advocacy, research and public discussion.
- ***Expand our robust coalition of allies to include new stakeholders*** from the private sector, nonprofit sector, philanthropy, public systems, government offices, supportive housing residents and the interested public.
- ***Bring the newest knowledge, analysis, data and curricula to more communities*** through focus, coordinated capacity building efforts and by investing in our consulting infrastructure and smart technology that allow us to broaden our reach.

### **Priority: *Expand Access to Supportive Housing***

CSH will be sure that supportive housing works for more people in more places. We'll expand access to supportive housing using a variety of housing and service models by leveraging available resources, maximizing effective use of existing units, and creating additional units for vulnerable individuals and families. As we uncover and create effective strategies for expanding access, we will share this knowledge and help providers, governments and communities incorporate them into their work.

- ***Target the people who most need supportive housing*** beginning with a robust industry-wide exploration of how to define that population and culminating in refined tools and techniques that we use to help communities target their supportive housing more effectively.
- ***Research, promote and develop new supportive housing models and service strategies*** with special attention on integrated models, preservation, opportunities around the Olmstead decision and health care integration.
- ***Maximize resources for supportive housing and related services*** by helping communities leverage mainstream funding like Medicaid, public housing vouchers or VASH vouchers service and housing; and by advancing innovative funding models like social impact bonds for projects targeting supportive housing.
- ***Broaden philanthropic support for supportive housing solutions*** to expand options for funding and strategic partnerships for CSH and the supportive housing industry overall.
- ***Engage mainstream public systems to integrate supportive housing in their work***, initiating or increasing participation in supportive housing in public systems, including veterans affairs, criminal justice, child welfare, human services, tribal communities and public housing authorities.
- ***Focus resources toward the highest-need communities*** as defined by CSH's priority community list.

### **Priority: *Deploy and Leverage Capital to Integrate Supportive Housing into Communities***

CSH will develop and strengthen our lending and grant making capacities to fuel the industry with targeted capital for growth and innovation. We'll integrate lending more deeply in our programmatic work, develop innovative lending products, and explore new funding approaches, including a national supportive housing loan fund.

- ***Develop and improve lending products*** that meet the diverse and evolving needs of the industry.
- ***Leverage lending and grant making as a catalyst for systems change*** by exploring how to use lending to encourage systems to integrate quality supportive housing and to ensure CSH a voice in discussions key to our priorities.
- ***Create a national supportive housing loan fund*** that leverages bank, government and philanthropic resources toward supportive housing solutions.
- ***Offer CSH's loan products to new geographic areas*** through a strategic process that supports the plan.
- ***Elevate and promote supportive housing*** within the community development and affordable housing fields.
- ***Seek opportunities to invest in projects and initiatives that improve the quality of life for people in supportive housing.***



### **Priority: *Improve and Sustain Quality in Supportive Housing***

CSH will build upon our existing work around quality in supportive housing to engage the industry around a standard for long-term quality used by investors and providers across the field. This work will include transforming the framework offered by our Seven Dimensions of Quality for Supportive Housing so that it informs burgeoning supportive housing solutions and directly applies to a variety of supportive housing models and tenants.

- ***Establish the supportive housing standard*** to ensure a common definition and framework for evaluating, implementing and preserving quality housing, property management and service features in every supportive housing setting, regardless of location, model and tenancy.
- ***Engage and educate the industry around quality*** with a capacity-building campaign that encourages providers to adhere to the standard by using training modules, best practices, case studies and tools.
- ***Embed the standards in government criteria for funding and programs*** at the local, county, state or federal level to ensure the minimum standards are being applied to funding and programmatic decision-making criteria.
- ***Integrate the standards in all of CSH's work*** including lending and programmatic efforts around the development of new housing and service models for a range of target populations.
- ***Launch a formal certification or rating program*** that evaluates supportive housing programs based on the established standard.
- ***Advocate for policies and funding allocations*** that ensure resource commitments are at a level that fosters high-quality support housing solutions, and that remove unnecessary restrictions that hinder high-quality operations.

### **Priority: *Continue Our Commitment to Performance and Accountability***

CSH will invest in our internal practices to ensure that we are a performance-driven organization. We'll continue to assess and refine our financial model, management practices, structure and policies so they align with our values and long-term strategic goals. We will invest in our talent to create a workforce with the skills and capacities needed to propel us forward as an industry leader and achieve the goals of our strategic plan.

- ***Develop a new revenue model*** that ensures we can support our strategic plans with a diverse and stable financial grounding.
- ***Conduct annual workforce planning*** that clearly articulates the essential roles for achieving the goals and priorities set out in our plan. Each year we will evaluate the organizational talent we require, leading to purposeful staff development efforts, employee growth opportunities and recruitment strategies.
- ***Review and assess our organizational structure*** to maximize our ability to best complete our stated objectives.
- ***Strengthen our culture of performance*** by enacting management strategies that include ongoing coaching and feedback for staff, and supervisory training and support. We will articulate core competencies and job expectations, set SMART goals, and implement work in a project management context. We will hold one another accountable, and set clear expectations for accountability on our internal and external efforts.

## Work and Budget Planning Process

Throughout the course of this Strategic Plan, CSH will continue the work and budget planning process we've used for the past several years. That process yields a set of cascading goals that allow us to make incremental and consistent progress each year. As work planning begins, CSH's Executive Team meets to map out detailed strategies and key objectives to be prioritized by teams at every level during the upcoming year. With that guidance in hand, CSH Directors work with their staffs to develop granular team and individual work plans that include the specific tasks, outputs and goals required to accomplish the annual priorities. With the core of the year's work plan in place, CSH Directors collaborate closely with the Finance and Executive Team to develop a corresponding budget for Board approval.

## Our Planning Approach

CSH launched our planning process in February 2012 with the goal of sustaining a collaborative and focused approach throughout the six month planning period. We were privileged to have received invaluable feedback from external stakeholders, as well as thoughtful input from our Board of Directors. CSH staff was also closely involved in the development of this plan, assuring a vital mix of big-picture thinking and on-the-ground practicality.

### *Phase One: Where Do We Stand Today?*

Before we plan the future, we needed a complete understanding of the present. We began our process with a thorough analysis of the current state of CSH and supportive housing industry. What are our strengths? What are our challenges? What needs to exist in the field? Where can CSH bring the most value? What are potential challenges ahead? We conducted interviews, held staff retreats, launched a competitive analysis, pulled data from our annual supportive Housing Industry Survey and collected our findings into a single assessment presented to our Board.

- *Senior Leadership Retreat*
- *Staff Interviews*
- *External Stakeholder Interviews*
- *Competitive Analysis*

### *Phase Two: What is Our Vision for the Future?*

The first phase of planning made it apparent that CSH was at a crossroads. After 20 years of leading the national supportive housing industry, we had reached nearly all of the milestones laid out at our founding. CSH needed to look closely at our fundamentals, including revisiting our mission, vision, values and impact model. Through a series of discussions, workshops and meetings, we refined those core elements to assure they're positioned for the future of CSH. We also worked to set specific goals for the next three years.

- *Senior Leadership Meetings*
- *Staff Brainstorms*
- *All-Staff Calls*
- *Board of Directors Meeting*

### *Phase Three: What is the Right Path to Achieve Our Vision?*

Next we began to determine the four to five most important strategic goals that would allow CSH to make the most progress toward achieving our mission and our strategic goals for the next three years. Throughout several months of meetings and discussions, we narrowed in on a concrete set of tactics designed to focus our work. We also established related metrics to use as a guide and measure of our ultimate success.

- *Senior Leadership Meetings*
- *Staff Brainstorms*
- *All-Staff Calls*
- *Board of Directors Meeting*

After ten months of planning, we brought the final CSH 2013-2015 Strategic Plan to our Board of Directors for approval in December 2012. This document was published following that meeting and will serve as a touchstone for CSH for the next three years.