



STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING GUIDE



ABOUT CSH

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is the national champion for supportive housing, demonstrating its potential to improve the lives of very vulnerable individuals and families by helping communities create more than 385,000 real homes for people who desperately need them. CSH funding, expertise and advocacy have provided \$1.5 billion in direct loans and grants for supportive housing across the country. Building on 30 years of success developing multiple and cross-sector partnerships, CSH engages broader systems to fully invest in solutions that drive equity, help people thrive, and harness data to generate concrete and sustainable results. By aligning affordable housing with services and other sectors, CSH helps communities move away from crisis, optimize their public resources, and ensure a better future for everyone. Visit us at www.csh.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CSH would like to thank the Oak Foundation and Bank of America for their financial support of this Third Edition of this Guide, which incorporates a racial equity lens into the Standards for Supportive Housing.

INQUIRIES

For additional resources and materials related to the Standards for Supportive Housing please visit csh.org/quality.

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BACKGROUND

Over its 30-year history, CSH has worked to promote the development of quality supportive housing throughout the country. Based on its knowledge and extensive conversations with supportive housing tenants, providers, funders and stakeholders, CSH in 2009 created a comprehensive set of resources describing quality in supportive housing — the Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing (DOQ).

Since that time, CSH has provided training and technical assistance to numerous organizations using the DOQ as a framework. Many organizations have accessed and used the DOQ to plan or strengthen their projects. Based on these experiences, CSH identified aspects of the DOQ that have been most valuable to communities, as well as opportunities to strengthen them. The second edition of the Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing reflected our work with communities to identify the aspects of high-quality supportive housing projects as well as updates that aligned with best practices in the field.

In 2020 and 2021, substantial updates were made to mark the third edition of this guidebook. The framework was updated to include a race equity and trauma-informed lens to all dimensions of quality supportive housing as well as data use, integration and analysis indicators. In addition, this edition includes an acknowledgement of organizational and system level influences on the dimensions of quality supportive housing. In an effort to embrace plain language, CSH has also changed the name of this framework from “Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing” to “Quality Supportive Housing Standards.”

CSH’s Race Equity Vision. CSH aspires to be a courageous, innovative, anti-racist leader supporting the ability of communities and systems to serve all racial and ethnic groups equitably. CSH believes the path to racial equity is grounded in the voices and experiences of those disparately impacted by structural racism and will only be attained through deliberate practices, policies, and programming that produce and sustain racially equitable outcomes. CSH envisions a more just and equitable world where everyone has the housing and services they need to thrive in the communities they call home.

In creating and sharing the CSH Standards for Supportive Housing, CSH strives to:

- Build the capacity of the supportive and affordable housing industries to create and operate high- quality, effective, and sustainable supportive housing units.
- Encourage the investment of adequate resources, especially from public systems, to support that capacity.
- Ensure that existing resources for supportive housing are being used equitably, efficiently, and effectively; and support the equitable allocation of new resources, including prioritizing resources to communities most impact by systematic racism and culturally responsive interventions.
- Create better outcomes for supportive housing tenants, especially those with multiple barriers to housing stability.

DEFINING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Supportive housing is a combination of affordable housing and supportive services designed to help individuals and families use stable housing as a platform for health, recovery, and personal growth. It focuses on balancing three distinct components of the model: housing, supportive services, and property and housing management. These three components can be viewed as a “three-legged stool,” in which each part must bear equal weight to have a balanced project. Supportive housing, however, should not be isolated from the larger community. A project’s relationship to the community adds a vital fourth leg, turning the stool into a community table at which supportive housing tenants and providers must have a seat.

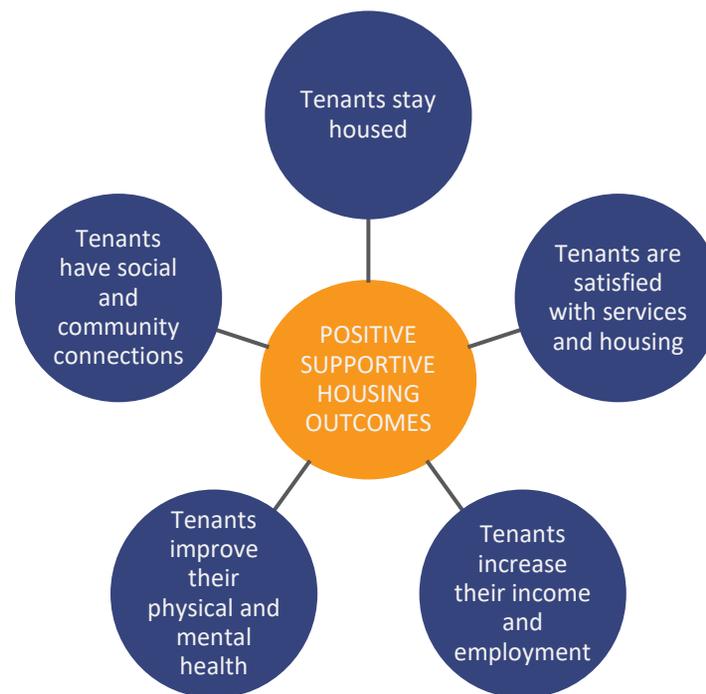
Supportive housing projects are as diverse as the communities in which they are located. All supportive housing:

- Prioritizes households facing multiple barriers to housing stability, including those whose heads of household are: experiencing homelessness; at risk of homelessness; or are staying in an institution because they have no other option; experiencing employment challenges; exiting other systems such as child welfare and justice; living with mental illness, substance use, and/or other disabling or chronic health conditions; and most impacted by structural and institutional racism.
- Recognizes the impacts of structural and institutional racism, including current practices of racial bias and discrimination, that serve as barriers to accessing housing, and actively creates an inclusive space rooted in racial equity.
- Is affordable (the tenant household ideally pays no more than 30% of its income toward rent).
- Provides tenant households with a lease or sublease that is identical to a market rate lease with no limits on length of tenancy, as long as lease terms and conditions are met.
- Proactively engages all members of the tenant household in a flexible and comprehensive array of supportive services without requiring participation in services as a condition of ongoing tenancy.
- Effectively coordinates with key partners to focus on fostering housing stability (including addressing issues resulting from substance use, mental health and other crises) and overall well-being.
- Supports tenants in connecting with community-based resources and activities, interacting with diverse individuals in the broader community, building strong social support networks, and creating a sense of belonging in their community.

Defining the Supportive Housing Tenant

In this guide, when referring to a tenant, CSH is referring to all members of the supportive housing household. Some households consist of one person, while others include entire families. If the tenant is a family, providers ensure an equal and intentional focus on housing and, services for the children and the adults. Goals and outcomes for both children and adults are simultaneously tracked. Children or youth temporarily absent from the unit due to out of home placement in foster care are also to be considered part of the tenant household.

CORE OUTCOMES FOR TENANTS IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



Supportive housing at its core focuses on improving the lives of tenants. It simultaneously has a positive impact on a variety of stakeholders. Although it is important to understand and measure the quality of individual aspects of supportive housing, such measures are meaningless if they do not produce positive results for tenants. The five positive supportive housing outcomes outlined in this document (as part of the larger CSH Standards for Quality Supportive Housing) are the core outcomes that all successful supportive housing should facilitate. The CSH Standards help organizations understand how to create and operate supportive housing that will best achieve these positive outcomes and ensure equitable impact of positive outcomes for all residents, with specific attention to outcomes for Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and other systematically marginalized or underserved community members. CSH encourages organizations to know their baseline performance with regard to these outcomes and use them to set aggressive targets for improvement.

Tenants Stay Housed

Supportive housing is designed to break a cycle of housing instability for tenants and ensure they remain in permanent housing. Stability promotes thriving and gives individuals and families, the opportunity to pursue health, progress, community, and voice in their own lives. Person-centered, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services help tenants remain housed and work towards their personal goals.

- Tenants stay in permanent housing, this includes those who exit supportive housing to other permanent housing.

Tenants Improve Their Physical and Behavioral Health

Supportive housing and associated services help tenants to access needed physical and behavioral health care and improve their health status.

- Tenants are connected with healthcare that is culturally responsive (i.e. acknowledges and is respectful of the diverse beliefs, practices, and needs of tenants).
- Healthcare linkages are made with organizations whose staff reflect the diversity of the population served or are culturally responsive.
- Tenants promptly receive any needed medical care, including preventive care.
- Tenants promptly receive any needed behavioral health care.

- Tenants report their mental health is more stable or has improved since entering supportive housing.
- Tenants strongly agree: “Staff helped me obtain information I needed so that I could take charge of my health.”

Tenants Increase Their Income and Employment

Tenants increase their income in supportive housing by obtaining benefits and/or employment. In cases in which tenants are already employed or receiving all benefits for which they are eligible, they maintain their income.

- Tenants who have been in supportive housing for one year or more have increased their income.
- Tenants who enter supportive housing with income and/or employment have maintained it.
- Tenants who express a desire to work are supported and, ultimately, successfully employed.

Tenants Are Satisfied with the Services and Housing

Tenant satisfaction is an important outcome that ultimately affects the quality of life for tenants and the ability of supportive housing projects to help tenants achieve housing stability.

- Tenants are satisfied with their units.
- Tenants are satisfied with the location of their housing.
- Tenants are satisfied with the services available to them.
- Tenants report feeling physically and emotionally safe in their homes.

Tenants Have Social and Community Connections

Supportive housing helps tenants to develop connections to their community and build social support networks.

- Tenants who express interest in community involvement are active community members who participate in organizations such as faith communities and peer associations, and/or in activities such as volunteering, voting, community gardens, or block parties.
- Tenants report a strong social support network.
- Tenants have opportunities to engage in peer support activities.
- Tenants have opportunities to engage in community advocacy effort.
- Tenants have reconnected with friends and family.

USING THE CSH STANDARDS

CSH designed the Standards to be used by a wide variety of stakeholders including developers, landlords, service providers, funders, tenant leaders, housing managers, property managers, government officials, and health care organizations. The Standards apply to all models of supportive housing projects in locations ranging from rural to suburban to urban. This document organizes information in two primary ways:

Component—The four primary elements of a supportive housing project:



Project Planning and Administration—The process of planning and leading the supportive housing project, including key decisions about physical structure, team members, and funding.



Property and Housing Management—The ongoing operation of supportive housing buildings and/or the connection to private market landlords.



Supportive Services—The package of support services available to help tenants use stable housing as a platform for individual health, recovery, and personal growth.



Community— Supportive housing contributes to community thriving which is marked by inclusion, sustainable connections, and greater resilience for tenants and communities.

All successful supportive housing projects are:

- **Tenant-Centered**—Every aspect of housing and services focus on meeting tenants’ needs.
- **Accessible**—Tenants of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities enter housing quickly and easily, through an equitable and transparent process.
- **Coordinated**—All supportive housing partners work to achieve shared goals.
- **Integrated**—Housing and services provide tenants with choices, honor their identities and background, promote belonging, and facilitate community connections.
- **Sustainable**—Housing and services operate successfully and have funding for the long term.

The matrix on the following page summarizes the relationship of the components of a successful supportive housing program or project to the CSH Standards, including both site-based and scattered-site model. This matrix also serves as a high-level overview of supportive housing standards. The subsequent pages provide a detailed description of each Standard as well as core outcomes for tenants that organizations implementing supportive housing standards have observed. A suite of tools is available for organizations in collaboration with their community’s key stakeholders to evaluate their projects to the Standards. Visit www.csh.org/quality

CSH STANDARDS MATRIX

This matrix summarizes each component and standard. Please continue to the subsequent pages for additional details. Visit csh.org/quality for available resources on planning for or operating quality supportive housing.

	 Project Planning and Administration	 Property and Housing Management	 Supportive Services	 Community Planning and Engagement
Tenant-Centered	Tenants play an active role in planning the supportive housing project or program. All partners share a commitment to helping tenants thrive.	Staff educates tenants on their rights and responsibilities as leaseholders, actively soliciting tenant feedback, and incorporating the feedback in decision-making.	Services are voluntary, comprehensive, and developed to reflect the diversity and unique needs of the community served.	Tenants have meaningful opportunities for leadership through tenant associations and board positions, prioritizing individuals from historically underrepresented groups.
Accessible	The housing is affordable, located in a neighborhood that meets tenants’ needs, and accommodating to persons with special needs.	Tenants move into housing quickly and the process is executed in an equitable and culturally humble manner, reflecting the varying backgrounds and needs of the community served.	Staff actively works to ensure that tenants are aware of available services, which are accessible and delivered in a culturally responsive manner.	The housing application and screening process is part of a larger community strategy to coordinate access to housing.
Coordinated	Roles, responsibilities, and communication strategies are clearly established among the supportive housing partners, formalized in written agreements and revisited regularly.	Staff works closely with service providers and landlords to ensure tenants sustain stable housing.	The primary service provider has established connections to essential, community-based resources that are inclusive of the diverse community needs.	Tenants who have high service needs or who are high utilizers of existing systems are given priority for available units.
Integrated	The supportive housing project meets or exceeds community standards and builds and sustains meaningful community partnerships.	All tenants are offered a choice of housing unit and have a lease identical to tenants not in supportive housing.	Staff supports tenants in developing and strengthening connections to their community.	There is an overall strategy promoting the ability of tenants to choose from a variety of housing models and neighborhoods.
Sustainable	The supportive housing project has funding that is adequate for its ongoing operations and services, and allows it to prioritize its intended tenants.	While respecting tenant rights and privacy, staff regularly checks to ensure that the unit remains in good condition and receives any needed maintenance.	The supportive housing project has funding that is sufficient to provide services to tenants on an ongoing basis and supports enough flexibility to address changing tenant needs.	Goals outlined in community planning efforts, such as community wide plans to end homelessness and consolidated plans, are furthered as a result of this supportive housing.

● COMPONENT: PROJECT PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

The Project Planning component refers to the process of planning and leading the supportive housing project, including key decisions about the physical structure and site of the project, team members, and funding.

PROJECT PLANNING: Tenant-Centered Standards

Tenants play an active role in planning the supportive housing project. All partners share a commitment to helping tenants thrive by recognizing persistent structural racism within the housing system and the barriers to accessing housing created by these systems. Partners actively work to use data-informed strategies to reduce disparities and work to create a system that promotes equitable access to housing.

Tenant-Driven Planning

Tenants are part of the team creating the supportive housing project, providing meaningful and ongoing input during the project's planning phase.

- The supportive housing partners include the voice and input of people with lived expertise in the planning, ongoing program implementation processes, and decision making.
- At least two individuals who represents the tenant population meet regularly with the supportive housing project team. Priority should be placed on people from historically underserved groups and groups that are overrepresented in the homeless population and other crisis systems.
- There is at least one focus group comprised of members of the priority tenancy population who inform the planning process.
- Steps are taken to ensure tenant feedback is solicited from all possible audiences and is reflective of the tenant community itself.
- The board and leadership of the supportive housing organization(s) is or will be diverse and representative of the tenant population and include individuals from historically underrepresented groups and at least one person with lived experience.

Commitment to Supportive Housing Goals

The project-lead has worked with community members from the target tenant population to co-create and support tenant goals for the supportive housing program or project. Additional partners, such as landlords, housing and property managers, and service providers, are selected for their ability to help achieve tenant outcomes and the overall supportive housing goals.

- Goals for the project are developed as part of an inclusive process that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the priority population to be served. The goals and target outcomes have been shared with all supportive housing partner organizations and agreed upon before the project begins operation.
- The goals and outcomes will be used as criteria when selecting additional partners such as landlords.

Unit Design and Features

Housing unit and building features meet needs that tenants identify, including privacy, household activities, and community interaction.

- There are options for tenants to live on their own or with household members of their choice. Units will have adequate living space and appliances for essential daily activities, such as cooking, eating, sleeping, and any other activities related to their personal goals and hobbies.
- There are a range of units available with enough bedrooms for the size of households.
- Units have private kitchens and bathrooms.
- There are plans to include common/shared indoor and outdoor spaces or access to spaces, such as community rooms, and gardens that can accommodate a variety of activities and gatherings.

PROJECT PLANNING: Accessibility Standards

The housing is affordable, in a location that meets tenants' needs, and accommodates persons with complex needs or barriers to maintaining housing and their well-being.

Affordability

Housing units will be affordable to tenants on an ongoing basis.

- The tenant household ideally pays no more than 30% of its household income toward rent and utilities and never pays more than 50% of income toward such housing expenses.

Location

Site location decisions are made with consideration of the needs of tenants and are located near community resources.

- Access to transportation is a key consideration for determining site location.
- The housing is located near public transportation or transportation services are planned. Transportation options include night and weekend availability.
- Sites are located within easy access to essential services and amenities such as food, education, and health care.
- Sites are located to promote connection to community including culturally appropriate services, recreation, and places of worship.

Trauma-Informed Design

The design of the project recognizes how the built environment can impact the well-being of tenants. Design incorporates trauma-informed principles.

- Spatial layout provides clear lines of site with minimal barriers and easy to navigate spaces.
- Light, color, and aesthetic features provide visual interest, promote calm and reduce ambient noises.
- Effort is made to provide “green” spaces and connection to outdoors.

Physical Accessibility

The housing unit, building, and any associated common areas accommodate persons with complex needs or barriers to maintaining housing and their well-being.

- Site plans are reviewed for accessibility and developed to local accessibility standards. The housing meets or exceeds the minimum number of accessible units as indicated by applicable federal, state, and local laws. There are additional units that are adaptable or incorporate universal design standards.

SUPPORTIVE PLANNING: Coordination Standards

Roles, responsibilities, and communication strategies are clearly established among the supportive housing partners, formalized in written agreements, and revisited regularly.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for each of the supportive housing partners are clearly defined in writing and are revisited and revised regularly to support the overall success of the supportive housing program.

- There are written descriptions of each supportive housing partner’s role, including, at minimum, the project sponsor, housing and/or property manager, and supportive services provider.
- These descriptions detail the responsibilities of each partner.
- These written descriptions are reviewed and revised annually at a minimum.

Communication

Staff regularly communicates regarding their roles and the coordination of their efforts.

- There are regularly scheduled forums for staff within all involved organizations to discuss their roles and the coordination of their efforts, tenant health and safety issues, and gaps in management and operations.
- There are effective methods (e.g. consistent use of shift reports or group communication tools like Teams or Slack channels) and opportunities for communication among the project partners between scheduled meetings.

Continuous Quality Improvement

The supportive housing project partners engage in continuous quality improvement activities and processes outlined in a Quality Improvement Plan or program policies.

- The supportive housing partners involved in ongoing operations schedule regular times to communicate and engage in a continuous quality improvement process to ensure project goals are being met.
- There are regularly scheduled forums for leaders within the supportive housing partner organizations to review data broken down by race, ethnicity, gender identity, and other key categories, in order to monitor performance against goals, identify needed strategies for improvement and any disparities in access and/or outcomes, and develop clear action steps.
- If disparities exist for any category, active steps are being taken to eliminate them, which is outlined in planning documents, meeting minutes or other trackable processes.
- Tenants engaged in leadership opportunities are included in the quality improvement process, providing feedback and accountability in partnership with supportive housing leader organizations.
- There are multiple, documented instances of how tenant and staff feedback has been incorporated into the supportive housing project, including how that information was shared with staff and tenants.

PROJECT PLANNING: Integration Standards

The supportive housing project meets or exceeds community standards and builds and sustains meaningful community partnerships.

Appearance

The supportive housing is attractive in appearance, and the unit and/or building maintains or exceeds community standards.

- The scale, appearance, design, maintenance, and quality of the building are consistent with the neighborhood and reflect or exceed local community standards.

Community Dialogue

The supportive housing project partners are active in ongoing community dialogue and activities.

- The supportive housing partners seek input from neighbors regarding the design, development, and operating plans for the housing. *
- The supportive housing partners incorporate this input into the supportive housing structure and meet community needs (such as incorporating a gym or meeting space), if possible. *
- Regular updates on the supportive housing development process and ongoing operations are provided to neighbors. *

PROJECT PLANNING: Sustainability Standards

The supportive housing project has funding that is adequate for its ongoing operations and allows it to prioritize its intended tenants. This includes funding to sustain services for the priority population.

Capital Funding

The financing of the supportive housing is structured to preserve its long-term affordability for tenants.

- There is a commitment, either through funding restrictions or through the presence of a mission- focused owner, to keep the property affordable for a significant period of time, typically at least 30 years. *
- If the supportive housing is near the end of its maximum affordability period, an ongoing ownership structure is identified to preserve its affordability. *

Rent Subsidies/Operating Funding

Long-term rental subsidies are in place to ensure affordable tenant rents and adequate income to cover operating expenses.

- The rent and/or operating subsidies for the supportive housing have been allocated to the sponsor organization for a multi-year period, ideally at least five years. Following this initial period, it is highly likely, based on history and current funding sources, that subsidies will be renewed.
- The project has sufficient cash flow and/or reserves to meet its ongoing obligations (such as debt service), operational costs and repair/replace major systems while maintaining affordable tenant rents. For a project that is not yet operational, the project budget indicates that these conditions will be met.

Efficiency

The design and operation of the housing incorporates features designed to increase efficiency and reduce ongoing expenses.

- The housing incorporates appropriate and feasible green design practices, such as the use of energy-efficient and water-conserving fixtures and products. *
- The housing utilizes durable materials chosen to reduce future maintenance costs. *
- The housing is designed with consideration of environmental factors (flood, hurricane, other natural disasters) and appropriate construction is planned to ensure the units are secure and sustainable in areas where unpredictable weather can present hazards.

** Items may be more relevant for supportive housing projects that are developing new units of housing (new construction or rehabilitation).*

COMPONENT: PROPERTY AND HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Property management refers to the set of functions involved with receiving and processing tenant rental applications, receiving rent payments, and ensuring the ongoing physical (facilities or physical plant) upkeep of the housing. In projects that include ongoing ownership of units or a long-term master lease arrangement, property management staff is typically part of the supportive housing team. Housing management refers to the set of services concerned with connecting tenants to housing in the private rental market, making rental payments for units that the organization may lease directly from a landlord, and in some cases, receiving tenant rent payments. This staff position often serves as an ongoing landlord liaison and has a distinct role from a service provider. Housing management staff is typically found in organizations in which the tenants or the organization directly lease the units associated with the project from the existing rental market.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: Tenant-Centered Standards

Staff educates tenants on their rights and responsibilities as leaseholders, actively solicits tenant feedback in a culturally humble way, incorporates tenant feedback in decision-making, and shares back with tenants how feedback influenced supportive housing operations and activities.

Tenant Education

Staff provides tenants with information on being good neighbors, their rights and responsibilities as leaseholders, building positive relationships with property management/landlords, and other topics of interest to tenants.

- Multilingual staff, translated materials, and/or interpretation and translation services are available to tenants.
- Shortly after move-in, staff provides tenants with an orientation to help maximize their experience with the housing and as tenants. This orientation introduces them to the housing unit, neighborhood, and their rights and responsibilities as leaseholders.
- Staff provides tenants with written materials to support the content covered in the orientation. Written materials use plain language and accessible formatting (e.g. larger font), and staff assists tenants in understanding their content, when necessary.

Tenant Feedback

Staff actively solicits tenant feedback in order to ensure the living environment helps tenants to achieve their goals.

- Staff actively solicits tenant feedback on their housing units/building and quality of services.
- Tenants can provide feedback in multiple ways (e.g. written, oral, online).
- There is a diverse and representative tenant council or another tenant-led group that meets regularly with the supportive housing project partners. Tenant recruitment for this role centers on historically marginalized groups.
- Steps are taken to ensure reported feedback is representative of the entire tenant base.
- Feedback is reviewed, using data broken down by race, ethnicity, gender identity and other key categories, in order to monitor performance against goals, identify needed strategies for improvement and any disparities in access and/or outcomes, and develop clear action steps that include tenant feedback in the solution.

Tenant Communication

Staff provides tenants with clear information on making property management requests and addressing emergencies.

- Staff clearly communicates to tenants the process to make property management requests and the timeline for receiving a response.
- A plan for 24-hour coverage exists to address urgent property-related issues.
- There is a clearly communicated plan for tenants to reach staff quickly.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: Accessibility Standards

Tenants move into housing quickly and the process is executed in an equitable and culturally humble manner, reflecting the varying backgrounds and needs of the community served.

Housing First

The supportive housing entrance process supports moving persons quickly into housing from settings such as the streets or shelters, without preconditions of treatment or compliance with rules outside of the normal requirements of a lease.

- The application process is short, and tenants are housed quickly in a unit of their choosing.
- The eligibility criteria for the supportive housing meets the minimum that the funder(s) or landlord require (without additional criteria imposed).
- Sobriety is not an entrance requirement. Maintaining sobriety is not a requirement for retaining housing.
- Medication compliance is not an entrance requirement.
- Agreement to participate in supportive housing services is not an entrance requirement.
- There is no minimum income requirement.

Landlord Relations

Staff has relationships with landlords and assists tenants in advocating for their entry into housing.

- Housing management staff has relationships with landlords who are willing to consider tenants who have poor credit, justice involved, or prior evictions. **
- With tenant permission, housing management staff assists tenants in advocating for themselves with landlords. **

***Items may be most relevant for supportive housing projects that lease existing units in the community rather than those that include the development of new units of housing.*

Application Process

The application process for the supportive housing project is streamlined, clearly stated, and separate from any assessment for services.

- The housing application and screening processes are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, appropriate, reasonable accommodations and necessary supports are provided, as needed, during the application and screening processes. This includes the provision of the lease in alternative formats, such as the use of a simplified picture-based document for tenants living with disabilities.
- The housing application is separate from the service needs assessment and does not request detailed clinical information.
- There is a timely and clearly stated process for the approval or denial of housing applications and appeals. There is an established system for staff to communicate with tenants during this process and to track and retain documentation.
- The supportive housing application and intake processes include the minimum number of questions needed to determine tenant eligibility.

Cultural Humility

Every aspect of the application process is designed to ensure that prospective tenants with diverse cultures and backgrounds understand the information being requested. Care is taken to eliminate potential bias and/or discrimination during the process.

- The intake/screening process is delivered in a trauma-informed and culturally competent way.
- All materials for tenants, including intake/application forms are written in plain language and can be completed verbally or provided in alternate languages. Staff assists tenants in understanding the content of written materials, when necessary.
- Multilingual staff, translated materials, and/or interpretation and translation services are available to tenants, as needed.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: Coordination Standards

Staff works closely with service providers, property managers, and landlords to ensure tenants sustain stable housing.

Building and Maintaining Landlord Relationships

Housing management staff quickly makes initial connections with landlords/property managers and promptly addresses any concerns.

- Shortly after move-in, housing management staff reaches out to landlords/property managers regarding tenant service needs and available services (with tenant permission). **
- Housing management staff promptly responds to any concerns raised by landlords/property management staff regarding supportive housing tenants. **
- Housing management staff has an established landlord advisory group that meets regularly. **

***Items may be most relevant for supportive housing projects that lease existing units in the community rather than those that include the development of new units of housing.*

Coordinating Property/Housing Management and Supportive Services

Property/housing management staff and supportive services providers perform distinct roles but understand one another's functions and communicate frequently.

- Property/housing management and supportive services have separate and distinct roles. Files and office space are not shared.
- There is a comprehensive, written eviction prevention policy that details how all supportive housing partners work together to promote housing stability. If eviction occurs, there is evidence of communication between service provider and property manager/landlord, including evidence of eviction prevention efforts.
- If a tenant is behind on rent, staff works with tenants to create a rent repayment plan and ensures they have the necessary support to fulfill its terms.
- All property/housing management and services staff have received training in order to understand one another's roles. *
- All property/housing management and services staff have received training in cultural humility and other training relevant to the target population (e.g. trauma-informed care, harm reduction). *
- Supportive services and property/housing management staff hold regularly scheduled forums to discuss their roles, the coordination of their efforts, any current issues, and to address gaps in services and operations, including examining any disparities in tenant outcomes by ability, diagnosis, race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, such as: timeliness of service and property management response to tenant needs, housing retention rates, eviction warnings, notices, and rates, as well as participation and satisfaction rates.
- Property/housing management staff promptly notifies services staff of any unmet tenant service needs. Supportive services staff promptly notifies property management staff when they observe safety or maintenance concerns.
- When notified of any issues, property/housing management and services staff respond promptly.

**Items may be less relevant for supportive housing projects that lease existing units in the community (e.g., scattered site units that involve multiple landlords).*

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: Integration Standards

All tenants are offered a choice of housing unit and have a lease identical¹ to tenant's not in supportive housing.

Housing Unit Choice

Tenants are offered a choice between multiple units of housing. If possible, they are also given a choice between housing models and locations.

- Staff works with tenants to develop an understanding of their needs and wants from a housing unit.
- Staff supports tenants in searching for and selecting a housing unit that meets their needs, including any accessibility needs. This includes communication and advocacy with landlords as needed.
- Tenants are given the opportunity to view and choose among multiple housing units.

Leases and Tenant Rights

Tenants have standard leases or subleases and a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

- All supportive housing tenants are provided with leases or subleases identical to non-supportive housing tenants — without service participation requirements or limits on length of stay (as long as lease terms are met). Ideally, the initial term of a lease or sublease is at least one year.
- Tenants cannot be evicted for not participating in services or for failing to follow through on their services and/or treatment plan.
- Tenants are not evicted for failing to maintain sobriety.
- As part of the lease signing process, property/housing management staff walks tenants through the lease agreement, clearly explaining their rights and responsibilities as leaseholders. Tenants are provided with a signed copy of their lease.
- Tenants are notified of the process for any lease violations and grievance/appeal procedures.
- Tenants are not removed from housing without legal eviction proceedings.

Community Dialogue

Property management is active in ongoing community dialogue and activities in partnership with the service provider.

- Property management participates in community improvement activities such as neighborhood association meetings and community policing discussions.
- Property management is responsive to neighbors' or community members' concerns regarding the supportive housing building and communicates those concerns to the service provider.
- Property management is responsive to tenants' concerns regarding community members' treatment of them. Property management is particularly aware of and responsive to discrimination concerns and responds in a way that is trauma informed.

¹ Leases should be identical in terms of rights and responsibilities for the tenant. Lease language may differ in attempts to make a lease more accessible to individuals with disabilities or a more accessible reading level.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: Sustainability Standards

While respecting tenant rights and privacy, staff regularly checks to ensure that the unit remains in good condition and receives any needed maintenance.

Housing Maintenance

Housing units are inspected regularly, proactively maintained and any identified issues are quickly addressed.

- Staff inspects units prior to move-in and at least annually thereafter. The inspections ensure that units meet or exceed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
- Tenants are given proper notice of any scheduled inspections.
- Staff ensures that inspection results that require follow-up or corrective actions are addressed within reasonable timeframes.
- Property management staff has a comprehensive, written plan and schedule for inspections, pest control, routine maintenance, and replacement activities designed to sustain the quality of the physical environment.
- There are clear procedures for tenants to report maintenance problems, and for work orders to be created and completed.
- Staff has funds available to address minor instances of tenant-caused damage to the unit, in the interest of maintaining landlord relationships and housing stability.
- Tenants are provided with information to assist them in environmentally friendly practices such as energy and water conservation, recycling, and use of non-toxic household products.

◆ COMPONENT: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The supportive services component refers to the comprehensive package of supports that help tenants sustain housing stability and meet life goals. These services may be provided by the project's designated primary service provider or by collaborating organizations. The primary service provider ensures that tenants can access needed services on an ongoing basis.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Tenant-Centered Standards

Services are voluntary, comprehensive, and developed to reflect the diversity and unique needs of the community served.

Service Design

All members of tenant households have easy, facilitated access to a flexible and comprehensive array of supportive services. Tenants are actively involved in choosing the services they would like to receive. The specific services and their intensity can vary over time, based on changing tenant needs.

- There is a comprehensive, written services plan for the supportive housing project. It describes the available services, identifying whether they are provided directly or through referral linkages, by whom, in what location and during what days and hours.
- All tenants are provided with a range of options for services that includes how to access case management services, medical services, mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, peer support, parenting skills, education, vocational and employment services, money management services, life skills training, and advocacy.
- Service staff actively involves tenants in the design, development, and implementation of their individualized service plans. Staff also works with tenants to develop goals that are realistic, achievable, measurable, and tailored to the tenants' preferences.
- The service design and staffing plan includes the opportunity for tenants to receive services and support from peers.
- Service needs assessments and individualized service plans are updated regularly to reflect tenants' changing service needs and goals.
- An effective formal discrimination complaint mechanism is in place for program participants.

Delivering Voluntary Services

Supportive services staff uses a variety of proactive and creative strategies to engage tenants in on-site and/or community-based supportive services, but participation is not a condition of ongoing tenancy. In delivering services to tenants, staff uses the most appropriate techniques or best practices, based on tenants' unique needs.

- Participation in services is voluntary, meaning that tenants can choose whether to participate and select the services they prefer. A significant percentage of tenant households voluntarily utilize at least one supportive service.
- Service staff receive training and support to implement techniques that engage and support tenants, such as motivational interviewing and the stages of change model.
- Service staff is trained to deliver services effectively, taking into account each tenant's age, culture, background and/or abilities.
- Services are not time-limited and are available to tenants throughout their tenancy. Services staff is available to provide more frequent and intensive services at the beginning of a tenant's residency, in order to facilitate the tenant's transition into supportive housing.
- Service staff assists tenants to anticipate, prevent, and manage the negative consequences of substance use or relapse. Supportive services staff works to reduce the harm caused by tenants' substance abuse, including actively working to prevent evictions.

- Service staff is educated about evidence-based best practices that can assist them with tenants, such as trauma-informed care, integrated dual diagnosis therapy, wellness recovery action planning, and critical time intervention.
- Service staff encourages all tenants to participate in meaningful activities of the tenants' choosing and assist all tenants who express a desire to work to obtain appropriate vocational services, employment services, and employment.
- Service staff supports tenants in moving on from supportive housing if the tenant chooses to do so and ensures that interested tenants have access to appropriate supportive services after moving out.
- Service staff explore participants' cultural views of wellness and illness, as desired by the tenants².

² Adapted from At Home/Chez Soi & MHCC. Center for Research on Inner City Health. Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Fidelity Scale Assessment Guide. <https://kmb.camh.ca/api/assets/e14ef2ec-41c5-433e-86ef-bedffe45c2d>

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Accessibility Standards

Staff actively works to ensure that tenants are aware of available services, which are at convenient hours and locations. Services are accessible and delivered in a culturally responsive manner, including services offered in other languages and by staff members who reflect the racial and cultural backgrounds of the persons served.

Housing Outreach

The service provider ensures that there are assertive outreach and in-reach efforts to facilitate the ability of persons living on the streets, in shelter, or in institutions to access the supportive housing.

- The service provider uses, or partners with an organization that uses, assertive outreach and in-reach methods to engage people living on the streets, in emergency shelters, in jails or prisons, or in institutions such as nursing homes.
- The service provider is aware of historical oppression/harm.

Availability of Services

Services staff ensures that tenants are aware of available services and that service hours and locations are convenient.

- Service staff meets with new tenants prior to move-in to review available supportive services options.
- Service staff meets with tenants regularly to review available supportive services.
- Tenants can choose to receive services in their home or can access services in a convenient community location.
- Service staff and programs are available during hours that ensure maximum access and utilization by tenants, including tenants who may be working or are engaged in other activities during regular business hours.
- Crisis services are available to tenants 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This can be provided indirectly through formal and informal connections to community-based crises services or a crisis hotline (e.g. 988)
- All programs and spaces used for the delivery of services are fully accessible to persons with varying abilities, and appropriate reasonable accommodations are provided to tenants, as needed, to facilitate their participation.
- Whenever possible, services are provided in additional languages reflective of the tenant population.
- Service staff work to meet the unique needs of families caring for young and service-dependent children (e.g. child care needs, school hours, additional support for those caretaking children with disability)

Services Staffing that Promotes Equity

Supportive housing partners are committed to hiring and retaining staff that are representative of the community served. Mechanisms exist for direct service staff to provide input, influence, and have concerns heard by management.

Commitment to Equity in Staffing

- Recruitment and hiring procedures that consider and assess anti-racism competency
- Frontline AND management staff reflect the community served
- Management and staff performance evaluations include items related to cultural humility, cultural bias, and anti-racism and
- Staff satisfaction and retention level data disaggregated by racialized group are obtained and reviewed.

Commitment to Staff Engagement and Voice

Staff and program participants are able to have their concerns heard by management and influence direction-setting activities. Benchmarks include:

- An effective formal discrimination complaint mechanism is in place for staff
- Frontline staff have a voice in agency/program direction-setting through multiple opportunities such as surveys, focus groups, workgroups, etc.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Coordination Standards

The primary service provider has established connections to essential, community-based resources that are inclusive of the diverse community needs.

Connections with Essential Community-Based Service Providers

The primary service provider facilitates tenants' connections to resources and supportive services in the community, particularly behavioral healthcare, primary healthcare, substance use treatment and support, and employment.

- Soon after housing entry, staff assists all tenants in applying for relevant public benefits.
- The primary service provider establishes linkages, codified by MOUs or other written agreements, with providers of core services to tenants, including, at minimum, behavioral healthcare, primary healthcare, substance use treatment and support, and employment. MOUs include a commitment to race equity and cultural humbleness in service coordination and provision.
- Tenants are provided timely access to behavioral health, primary health, and substance use services. Tenants have a primary health care provider.
- Tenants can access substance use treatment, including medication assisted treatment and support, shortly after making the request.
- Tenants are connected with relevant workforce development and employment resources shortly after expressing interest.
- Service providers honor a tenant's and or a family's individuality and unique family culture when working with them to help them make decisions that feel best for their situation.

Focus on Housing Stability

Supportive services are designed to support the stability of tenants and promote their ability to thrive in housing.

- Property/housing management and supportive services have separate and distinct roles. Files and office space are not shared.
- There is a comprehensive, written eviction prevention policy that details how all supportive housing partners work together to promote housing stability. If eviction occurs, there is evidence of communication between service provider and property manager/landlord, including evidence of eviction prevention efforts.
- Service provider coordinated with property management when tenants are behind on rent. Staff works with tenants to create a rent repayment plan and ensures they have the necessary support to fulfill its terms.
- All property/housing management and services staff have received training in order to understand one another's roles.*
- All property/housing management and services staff have received training in cultural humility and other training relevant to the priority population (e.g. trauma-informed care, harm reduction)*
- Supportive services and property/housing management staff hold regularly scheduled forums to discuss their roles, the coordination of their efforts, any current issues, and to address gaps in services and operations, including examining any disparities in tenant outcomes by race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation, such as: timeliness of service and property management response to tenant needs, housing retention rates, eviction warnings, notices, and rates, as well as participation and satisfaction rates.
- Supportive services staff promptly notifies property management staff when they observe safety or maintenance concerns.
- Services staff actively engage tenants to understand their obligations under the lease as well as their rights and responsibilities.
- Services staff coordinate with property management regarding requests for reasonable accommodations or modifications.

**Items may be more relevant for supportive housing projects where units are primarily housed in a single-site.*

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Integration Standards

Staff supports tenants in developing and strengthening connections to their community.

Community Connections

Staff works with tenants to identify community opportunities and relationships of interest and ensure that they have the support needed to pursue them.

- Staff provides tenants with information about community resources and activities in conjunction with the move-in process. This also includes an orientation to the neighborhood.
- Staff supports tenants in identifying and accessing community activities of interest, such as public gardens, faith communities, and peer associations. This may include support with obtaining transportation.
- Staff compile and regularly update a profile of social and cultural resources in the service area for various ethnic, racial, and cultural groups representative of persons served. This is maintained and made available to program participants throughout tenancy (houses of worship, culturally specific community-based organizations, etc.)³
- Staff provides tenants with opportunities to connect with peers, including other supportive housing tenants, if desired.
- Staff ensures tenants have opportunities to interact with diverse individuals, including individuals in the broader community.
- Staff supports tenants in establishing or strengthening positive relationships with friends and/or family members.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Sustainability Standards

The supportive housing has funding that is sufficient to provide services to tenants on an ongoing basis that are flexible enough to address changing tenant needs.

Funding Commitments

Funding or a funding strategy is in place to ensure that tenants have access to supportive services for the life of the project.

- Service funding for the supportive housing is committed/contracted for a multi-year period. Following this initial period, it is highly likely, based on history and current funding sources, that funding will be renewed.
- The service funding source(s) is flexible enough to allow for the specific services to change with tenant needs, both daily and throughout the life of the supportive housing program.

Provider Partnerships

The primary service provider has established linkages with other service providing organizations to ensure tenants have access to comprehensive services on an ongoing basis.

- The primary service provider has written agreements with external providers that services will be made available to tenants.
- The primary service provider ensures partnerships and care coordination/teaming approach with and for the tenant household to align across supportive housing providers, mainstream systems (e.g. health, public benefits, child welfare, schools, etc.), and other formal/informal community and cultural resources and supports.

³ Adapted from At Home/Chez Soi & MHCC. Center for Research on Inner City Health. Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Fidelity Scale Assessment Guide. <https://kmb.camh.ca/api/assets/e14ef2ec-41c5-433e-86ef-bedffe45c2d>

▲ COMPONENT: COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ENGAGEMENT

The most successful supportive housing does not operate in isolation, but serves an integral role in the larger community. This component represents the opportunities that an individual supportive housing project has to contribute to the achievement of larger community goals, including dismantling traditionally held barriers aimed toward marginalized groups.

COMMUNITY: Tenant-Centered Standards

Tenants have meaningful opportunities for leadership through tenant associations and board positions, prioritizing individuals from historically underserved groups.

Tenant Leadership

Leadership development opportunities for tenants are created and/or supported by all partners.

- The supportive housing partners support or promote the development of a community-wide (at the local, regional or state level) association of supportive housing tenants that meets regularly and is tenant-led.
- Tenants have meaningful opportunities for leadership through tenant associations and board positions and are encouraged to pursue them. Board and association leadership should be broad, diverse, and representative of the tenant population and include individuals from historically underserved groups.
- Each of the supportive housing partners has at least one tenant representative on their organization’s board, prioritizing historically underserved groups and or their priority population (e.g. youth). The organization(s) provides support to tenants who serve on boards by providing board mentors, transportation, child care, and stipends.
- Written agreements between the lead supportive housing partners and external partner organizations specify that current or former recipients of services or housing serve on their boards or in key leadership roles. Written agreements should also prioritize and center racial equity as a key component of service delivery.
- The supportive housing staff offer resources or training on community advocacy efforts.

COMMUNITY: Accessibility Standards

The housing application and screening process is part of a larger community strategy to coordinate access to housing.

Coordinated Access

The supportive housing partners participate in or lead community efforts to coordinate access to housing.

- The supportive housing partners participate in a designated community process to coordinate access to housing, including the use of coordinated referrals and triage, common applications, common entrance criteria, and centralized waitlists. If the community does not have coordinated access to housing or the process does not adequately include the projects priority population, the supportive housing project partners clearly communicate the referral and application process to the entire community.
- The supportive housing partners participate in or lead efforts to ensure that the community application processes, documentation of eligibility, and intake processes are streamlined, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and efficient, so that applicants are not asked for the same information on multiple occasions.
- The supportive housing partners are actively engaged in community efforts to ensure that coordinated access to housing is equitable and that the communities most impacted by homelessness or housing instability are being connected to housing.

COMMUNITY: Coordination Standards

Tenants who have high service needs or who are high utilizers of existing systems are given priority for available units.

Prioritizing Units

The supportive housing partners prioritize persons who need both affordable housing and supportive services and who are high utilizers of existing systems (e.g. hospital, jail, child welfare, shelter) for all or a portion of available units.

- To the extent allowed by funding, the supportive housing program prioritizes renting units to persons that the community data identify as having a high need for services and/or who frequently use crisis systems.

Discharge Planning

The supportive housing partners connect with and support the efforts of community stakeholders working to ensure positive institutional discharges.

- The supportive housing partners participate in community discharge planning efforts designed to ensure that persons exiting institutions and crisis systems such as hospitals, nursing homes, foster care, or prison/jail do not experience homelessness after their release but instead have access to permanent, affordable housing.

COMMUNITY: Integration Standards

There is an overall strategy promoting the ability of tenants to choose from a variety of housing models and neighborhoods.

Tenant Choice

The supportive housing partners help develop and implement a community plan designed to ensure that new supportive housing increases tenant choice with regard to housing models and locations.

- The community has a plan to ensure that supportive housing exists in a variety of models and locations. When this is not the case, the supportive housing partners promote the development of such a plan.
- For new projects, the model and location of the supportive housing contributes to the achievement of this plan by increasing tenant choice.

COMMUNITY: Sustainability Standards

Goals outlined in community planning efforts are furthered as a result of this supportive housing.

Community Planning

The supportive housing project partners coordinate with larger community efforts, aligning with and furthering the achievement of related community plans.

- The development and/or ongoing operation of the supportive housing helps achieve goals outlined in relevant community plans, such as consolidated plans, Family First prevention services plans, and/ or Olmstead implementation plans.
- The supportive housing project partners participate in the development and ongoing implementation of relevant community planning processes.
- The supportive housing project partners offer opportunities for staff and tenants to engage in community planning and advocacy efforts

Data Tracking and Sharing

While preserving client confidentiality, the supportive housing partners track and share demographic, performance, and other relevant data to improve outcomes for tenants.

- The supportive housing program uses appropriate information management systems to track relevant data, in order to determine its performance against project goals and community standards.
- The supportive housing partners participate in community data-sharing agreements to track data and performance community-wide.
- The supportive housing program reviews data to determine if disparities exist related to tenant outcomes, housing location, rate of housing placement etc. for race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other key categories relevant to their priority populations.
- If disparities exist for any category, active steps are being taken to eliminate disparities, which is outlined in planning documents, meeting minutes, or other trackable processes.
- The supportive housing partners document, manage, and communicate data on inventory availability in real time through a shared database system that is updated and accessible to all partners in real time.

IMPLEMENTING AND SUSTAINING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING STANDARDS

Supportive Housing Quality Suite of Tools

CSH created a suite of tools designed to cultivate and reinforce quality standards in supportive housing throughout each stage from planning a new project or program to evaluating outcomes, policies and practices. This suite of tools serves both built supportive housing projects and scattered site supportive housing programs. They can be used for a single agency or for multiple providers across a region, as providers and funders work to assess and plan for alignment with Quality Supportive Housing Standards.

All of these tools are based on the CSH Standards for Supportive Housing outlined in this Guidebook and the online Quality [toolkit](#), more information on all our quality tools can be [accessed here](#) on our website. The suite includes:

Evaluating Quality at the Planning Phase

- Quality Supportive Housing Readiness Survey: an online tool for projects in pre-development or planning phase to ensure that quality standards are embedded into all aspects of planning and project design. This self-assessment and supporting documentation can lead to CSH Endorsing a project. *There is no cost for using this tool.*
- CSH Pre-Development Quality Endorsement: programs/developments in pre-development or planning phase can submit planning documents to CSH for review to ensure that their new project meets CSH Quality Standards using an interactive version of the Planning Self-Assessment Tool. If supporting documentation and planning goals meet quality standards, CSH will provide its Quality Endorsement to projects, including a letter of support endorsing the project and a CSH Quality logo that can be used in funding applications.
- Supportive Housing Institutes: our premiere workshop experience. The Institute offers 12 sessions of practical steps toward a supportive housing project for your target population and community. Supportive housing development teams complete the Institute with a detailed development and management plan, designed to successfully access funding.

Evaluating Quality for Existing Programs/Developments

- The Quality Supportive Housing Self-Evaluation and Results Report: an online evaluation tool for supportive housing programs already in operation to self-assess their alignment with the CSH Quality Standards. The Results Report generates a report of program alignment with quality standards across 5 standards, 4 project components and indicators. *There is no cost for using this tool.*
 - Detailed Results Report and Coaching: For a fee, a detailed results report can be provided with customized links to recommended resources from the CSH Quality Toolkit and CSH Training Center. For additional cost, a one-hour coaching call can be scheduled with the CSH Quality Team to review the detailed report and discuss recommendations for improvement.
 - Combined Portfolio Report Summary: This is intended for use in communities that are tracking results across a portfolio to compare results and trends from individual program and project responses to the online Quality Supportive Housing Self-Evaluation tool. This is particularly useful for communities looking to provide tailored training and targeted TA to groups of providers facing the same challenges. (Costs vary depending on size of portfolio.)

For more information about the CSH's Quality tools, please contact quality@csb.org.

Supportive Housing Training Center

The CSH [Supportive Housing Training Center](#) offers practical, interactive training solutions that empower people to learn about, build, & provide high-quality supportive housing in their community. The Training Center includes hundreds of webinars & webinar series, self-paced online classes and videos. The Training Center curriculum is informed by the CSH Standards for Supportive Housing and reinforces how programs can implement these standards by building capacity and the skills of their staff.

Supportive Housing Training Center Includes:

- A diverse range of learning resources and professional development opportunities
- Free learning resources and events
- Affordable live training and interactive self-paced e-learning for learning at anytime
- Learner action guides to help you apply your learning
- Training packages and plans
- Organizational discounts and group rates
- Training certificates for all courses
- Access to live training course recordings for 90 days

For more information about the Training Center, please contact training@csh.org.