



CSH Quality Supportive Housing Standards

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Supportive housing combines affordable housing with supportive services to help people who face the most complex challenges live with stability, autonomy, and dignity. CSH created these standards to guide a wide range of groups—including tenant leaders, housing developers, landlords, service providers, funders, property managers, government officials, and health care organizations—to work together to build and operate high-quality supportive housing.

The Quality Standards apply to all types of projects, whether site-based or scattered-site, and in rural, suburban, or urban areas. How the standards are put into practice may vary due to the diversity of supportive housing models.

Standards for high-quality supportive housing



Tenant-Centered

Housing and services focus on tenants' needs and are designed and delivered in collaboration with them.



Accessible

Tenants of all backgrounds and abilities can enter housing quickly and maintain stability over time.



Coordinated

Supportive housing partners work together to achieve shared goals.



Sustainable

The housing and services are designed and maintained to ensure long-term consistency and quality.

This guide breaks down four core components of supportive housing—Management and Administration, Landlord and Property Management, Supportive Services, and Community Planning and Engagement—and explains how to achieve these Quality Standards.



Management & Administration Standards



Tenant-Centered

- Tenants actively participate in program decision-making.
- Tenants are involved in both program and board leadership; their feedback guides program improvements.



Accessible

- Housing is affordable, with tenants paying no more than 30% of their household income for rent and utilities.
- Policies and procedures are designed to avoid overly restrictive rules.



Coordinated

- Partners (e.g., owners, operators, property managers, service provider(s), security, tenants, etc.) have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that are transparently communicated to tenants, community partners, and staff.
- Partners participate in ongoing quality improvement activities and processes related to housing and services.



Sustainable

- The budget includes long-term funding for operations and services, ensuring all supportive housing costs are covered while keeping rents affordable and services robust for tenants.
- Long-term planning accounts for cost-of-living adjustments, living wages, and additional resources to address staff retention and prevent burnout



Landlord & Property Management Standards



Tenant-Centered

- Tenants are connected quickly to safe, healthy, quality housing (including units, buildings, and common areas) that meets their needs, including accommodations related to accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Tenants have options for housing including location, neighborhood, and/or specific units when possible.



Accessible

- Each tenant household gets a lease or sublease comparable to a private-market lease. Leases do not require tenants to participate in programs or services; they will not lose their housing if they do not use such services.
- Units are available to tenants regardless of income, credit history, justice involvement, or eviction history.
- Staff members who interact with tenants—including property management, maintenance, security, and other building and support staff—receive training and support in trauma-informed approaches and de-escalation techniques.



Coordinated

- Supportive services staff and property management (and/or private landlords) coordinate regularly and proactively to ensure tenants maintain stable housing.
- If a tenant's housing stability is at risk, supportive services staff, tenant(s), and property management (and/or landlords) will collaborate on an eviction-prevention plan.



Sustainable

- Repairs are completed quickly, and tenants are kept informed of the timeline and progress.
- Units, common areas, and buildings are proactively maintained, with tenants given notice before property management or landlords enter their unit, as required by their lease.
- Tenants have a simple process to request repairs, and property management or the landlord clearly communicate throughout the process.

Supportive Services Standards



Tenant-Centered

- Providers offer a broad range of flexible, individualized services that adapt to tenant needs and include peer support and advocacy.
- Services are voluntary and promote tenant choice, helping them stay informed, safe, healthy, and housed.
- Providers frequently and consistently engage tenants to ensure their needs are met, regardless of whether tenants participate in services.



Accessible

- Services are conveniently located, low-barrier, easy to access, and offered at flexible times that work for tenants.
- Providers use creative engagement strategies to connect tenants to housing and services.



Coordinated

- The primary service provider quickly connects tenants to needed public benefits.
- Property management and supportive services work together to maintain housing stability, prevent evictions, and support tenants.
- Staff help tenants develop and strengthen connections to community resources, activities, peers, and family.



Sustainable

- Supportive housing has stable, flexible funding and established provider partnerships to ensure tenants can continue accessing services even if they choose to move on from the supportive housing program.
- Supportive housing has sustainable funding or reserves sufficient to maintain appropriate services case management levels of between 1:10 to 1:25, depending on the population served and service model.



Community Planning & Engagement Standards



Tenant-Centered

- Tenants have meaningful opportunities to participate in and/or lead efforts where they can make decisions and voice their needs, including shaping programs, services, and policies.
- Staff offer guidance and support to help tenants build confidence and feel empowered to make meaningful choices in their own lives and the systems and services they use. Staff also connect tenants with opportunities to participate meaningfully in their communities.
- Tenants choose from a variety of housing options, programs, and neighborhoods; each individual tenant leads their own decision-making process.



Accessible

- Community partners collaborate to streamline the process of moving into supportive housing, ensuring it is easy to navigate.



Coordinated

- Supportive housing partners work together to improve and simplify the overall experience of securing housing, including the search for housing, filling out applications, and lease signing.
- Supportive housing providers participate in a broader, coordinated community effort to provide a range of housing choices.



Sustainable

- Supportive housing partners gather and share essential information while maintaining tenant privacy.
- Data is used to understand trends and make improvements that enhance tenants' housing experiences.





CSH Quality Standards Matrix

This matrix summarizes each component and standard, with examples of how they may overlap. The work required to apply each standard to each component will differ based on the program type and community. For tailored support in implementing these standards, please reach out to consulting@csh.org or visit csh.org/quality.

	Management & Administration	Landlord and Property Management	Supportive Services	Community Planning and Engagement
Tenant-Centered	Tenants help guide the project or program; everyone involved is dedicated to helping them succeed.	Tenants have a choice of housing options and are quickly connected to safe, healthy, and quality housing that meets their needs.	Services are voluntary, comprehensive, flexible, and available for as long as needed.	Tenants have meaningful opportunities for leadership and advocacy and can choose from a variety of housing and program options.
Accessible	Tenants have meaningful opportunities for leadership and advocacy and can choose from a variety of housing and program options.	Units are made available to tenants regardless of their background, and their leases are identical to those who are not in supportive housing.	Services are conveniently located and offered 24/7; providers use creative engagement strategies to connect with tenants.	Community partners collaborate to ensure the move-in process is easy for tenants to navigate.
Coordinated	Supportive housing partners have clear roles and communication plans; they participate in ongoing quality improvement activities.	Staff, service providers, and landlords work together to quickly connect tenants to housing, support housing stability, and swiftly resolve maintenance issues.	Primary service providers coordinate with property management and local resources to support tenants and help them develop and strengthen desired community connections.	Supportive housing partners work together to improve and simplify the process of securing housing and ensure there is a community-wide effort to increase housing choice and availability.
Sustainable	Supportive housing has sufficient funding to continue operating, provide services to tenants, and retain staff.	Staff keep each unit in good condition while respecting tenant privacy; they offer a simple process for requesting and receiving repairs.	Staff keep each unit in good condition while respecting tenant privacy; they offer a simple process for requesting and receiving repairs.	Supportive housing partners collect and share important data to understand trends and make informed improvements while maintaining tenant privacy.

Acknowledgements

CSH thanks Yield Giving for their generous financial support of this Fourth Edition of the CSH Quality Supportive Housing Standards. Over its 30-year history, CSH has dedicated itself to promoting the development of quality supportive housing throughout the country. Drawing on this knowledge and expertise—and building on relationships with supportive housing tenants, providers, funders, and community partners—CSH created the first edition of this guide in 2009, then titled Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing (DOQ). Since then, we have created multiple iterations to continue to best meet the needs of this ever-changing field.

This edition was born of a need identified by supportive housing partners across the country: a simplified resource that can be adapted and used in a variety of community settings—from large cities to rural environments and suburban locales—and applied to different types of supportive housing building and program types.

To meet these needs, CSH launched a collaborative revision process. We brought on a consultant with unique qualifications: experience both as a supportive housing tenant and as a consultant on local supportive housing standards in her home community. The team gathered information with CSH staff nationwide who implement Supportive Housing Institutes, conduct trainings, and provide technical assistance using the Quality Standards. CSH staff provided feedback at multiple points in the revision process. Further, six listening sessions with individuals in the field were conducted—two with supportive housing providers and four with supportive housing tenants—to ensure we incorporated the needs and perspectives of those on the ground.

Just as building and operating supportive housing is a collaborative effort requiring many different partners to come together to leverage the strengths and expertise of each, the Quality Standard's revision followed the same collaborative approach. The result is a resource designed to serve supportive housing tenants, service providers, funders, operators, developers, property managers, and owners alike.

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