STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL FUNDING ALIGNMENT PROJECT

SITE-BASED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING STANDARDS

home safe helpful well trained staff
love welcoming culturally inclusive
respectful grace equitable representation
follow through trauma-responsive trauma aware staff supportive equity forgiving
tenant centered friendly secure community peaceful peer staff
diverse staff person-centered collaborative trauma informed listening
comforting understanding tenant voice
person and family center
communication

DECEMBER 2021
PREPARED BY NORTHSTAR POLICY CONSULTING

North Star Policy Consulting

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INTRODUCTION

Permanent supportive housing is a type of housing designed for people experiencing homelessness that combines housing affordability with services to support housing stability. In *site-based* supportive housing, units are designated for supportive housing and co-located either for an entire building or for a portion of units within a larger building.

The benefit of site-based supportive housing is that it provides a long-term commitment of affordable housing specifically designed to serve people experiencing homelessness. For people living at these sites, it can be a source of much-needed sense stability and community. Developing new site-based permanent supportive housing, in addition to maintaining existing units, therefore, is an important component of Minnesota's efforts to end homelessness.

Funding site-based supportive housing comes with its challenges, however. Funding affordable housing alone can be excessively complicated, usually involving multiple funding sources and types. Adding in the need for supportive services and the unique operating requirements of supportive housing increases this complexity. Ensuring successful timing and alignment of funding of projects is also difficult without a common understanding of the expectations for service and operating requirements among all the partners (funders, developers, property management and service providers).

The Minnesota Supportive Housing Stewardship Council has committed to recommending a set of operating and service standards for site-based permanent supportive housing. The purpose of these standards is to set clear expectations regarding how site-based permanent supportive housing is operated and the services offered to people living there. The hope is that this will lead to a better understanding of the financial needs of projects, leading to more predictable and sustainable funding and overall better quality of housing that meets the needs of people served.

In fall 2021, North Star Policy Consulting worked with the Stewardship Council to establish supportive housing standards for site-based supportive housing settings. The standards were based on the results of an existing literature review and feedback from stakeholder engagement, with input from a work group made up of representatives from the Stewardship Council. More information about the methodology is available in Appendix A.

> The **Minnesota Supportive Housing Stewardship Council** is a collaboration of organizations that fund the development and operation of supportive housing throughout Minnesota, including state and federal agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. The purpose of the Stewardship Council is to directly impact the creation, preservation, and stabilization of supportive housing in order to prevent and end homelessness through supportive housing policy, advocacy and technical assistance.

THIS DOCUMENT IS ORGANIZED INTO THREE SECTIONS:

    I.   Proposed standards for supportive *services* and operating *activities*

    II.   Proposed standards for property management and service providers *organizations*

    III.   Recommendations to *funders* to help support the implementation of these standards

STANDARDS FOR OPERATING ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Differentiating between operating activities and supportive services provides a framework to better identify the various supportive housing-related activities needed in site-based permanent supportive housing. The chart below provides definitions of these activities and services that will be used throughout the rest of the document.

Supportive housing operating activities	Individualized supportive services	Site-based supportive services
Required for the property as a whole to function smoothly	Help individual households succeed in housing	Supports households by ensuring continuity of individualized services Facilitates community building
Available to all supportive housing residents at the property	Person-centered and individualized to the needs of each household	Available to all supportive housing residents on an as-needed basis
Above and beyond typical property management OR activities that are specialized due to unique needs of supportive housing	Primary purpose is to help households maintains stable housing	Serves as back-up/supplement to individualized supportive services and facilitates community building or group activities
Provided by a designated site-based service provider or property manager	May be provided by designated site-based service provider or another provider, depending on the person's choice	Provided by the designated site-based service provider
Funding is designated for the site.	Funding for services should be primarily based on person's or family's needs. Billable services and existing community-based supports should be used whenever possible.	Funding is designated for the site and/or program.
Examples: Front desk services, facilitating tenant intake	Examples: developing a housing stability plan, benefits assistance	Examples: Backup to individualized service provider, planning monthly building-wide activities

Security and safety measures reflect the needs of the population served.

• Sites housing children have enhanced security measures in place.
• Property management and service staff proactively reach out to local law enforcement to build respectful partnerships.
• Sites that experience a high rate of security issues have increased security measures and community engagement efforts with local law enforcement.
• The amount of funding designated to hire security staff is sufficient to account for higher than typical qualifications and enhanced training needs.
• Sites have clear policies for addressing crises, including mental health crisis response. Contacting law enforcement is the last available option.
• Sites consider and budget for the potential need for additional safety and security measures:
    o Staff designated to monitor safety and respond to crises (security officers, crisis response, on-call, etc.)
    o Security equipment for common areas (cameras, locks, etc.)
    o Security equipment for individual units (window alarms, door jams, etc.)

Tenant application and intake processes are designed to reduce barriers experienced by people experiencing homelessness.
• The housing application and screening processes are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. • Appropriate and reasonable accommodations and supports are provided, as needed, during the application and screening processes. • The housing application process is separate from any 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 and referral sources during the application process and to track and retain documentation. • The supportive housing application and intake processes ONLY includes the minimum number of questions needed to determine tenant eligibility, such as those required by funders. • Tenant application and re-certification processes are designed and regularly reviewed to ensure they are low-barrier and place minimal burden on the tenant. Application-related fees are reduced or eliminated where possible. • Site's tenant selection policies and procedures comply with Minnesota Housing's Tenant Selection Plan Guidelines.
Policies and procedures related to leasing and rent payment support the goal of housing retention for 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). • The property has procedures in place to ensure that tenants are provided with a copy of their lease and have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

- Responses to lease violations are aimed at keeping tenants stably housed whenever possible, while balancing community trust and safety. The process responding to lease violations is transparent and includes the tenant's service provider.
- Rent payment policies are flexible and person-centered, including the option to adjust rent due dates and having a plan in place for when tenants are struggling financially.
- Tenants have the option to end their lease without penalty if they find another affordable housing option.
- Discharge policies are clear, applied equally to everyone and include options for appeal.

Site amenities support tenant success, help build community, and facilitate integration.

- Wi-Fi is available in community spaces as well as individual units.
- The availability of any additional amenities will depend on individual property needs and preferences of tenants and may include:
  - Exercise equipment
  - Computers and printer
  - Laundry
  - Childcare
  - Transportation
  - Teleconferencing
  - Community space

Building maintenance accounts for the unique needs of the supportive housing population.

- Properties have a respectful process for regular apartment checks to fix things as they break and support people with hoarding/cleaning issues.
- Tenants have a choice of unit whenever possible.
- Sites accommodate for higher than typical maintenance needs, including a fulltime custodian when necessary.
- Pest control is provided as needed.

New tenants are welcomed and given the information they need to be successful tenants.

- New tenants receive an orientation within one week of move-in that includes:
  - Info on unit and building amenities
  - Reviewing property rules
  - Info on community resources

Site policies and rules are tenant-driven with the goal of increasing housing retention.

- Guest policies balance tenant rights and the need to maintain safety and property rules. Tenants have the option to get assistance in enforcing guest policies from staff if desired.
- Policies and procedures are transparent, easy to read, unambiguous and enforced for everyone equally.
- Tenants sign a copy of the policies or site manual after going through it with the service provider and/or property management.
- Policies include a list of tenants' rights, including clear grievance procedures that are posted and easily accessible.
- Policies include plans for emergencies and natural disasters.
- All policies will be available in multiple languages as needed or upon request.
- Sites support tenant councils and respond to requests and concerns in a timely matter.
- Conflict mediation is available when needed.

A fully staffed front desk is required for larger 100% supportive housing sites and/or those serving people with higher barriers to housing stability.

- Front desk staff work in collaboration with the supportive housing services team by proactively identifying potential housing stability crises and supporting tenants in adhering to lease requirements, including enforcing guest policies.
- Front desk staff are available beyond normal business hours.
- While front desk services may include activities contributing to the safety of the property, they should be distinct from security.
- Front desk staff greet tenants and work to create a welcoming environment
- Staff reflect and are connected to the community they serve; have background in social services; and are trained in mental health, boundaries and communication skills, conflict management/mediation and de-escalation techniques.
- Front desk staff does not include current tenants.

PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES

Service plans are required for all tenants and should be tailored to tenants' needs and preferences.

- All tenants have a person-centered, individualized plan to identify strengths and needs related to housing stability and steps to address potential issues. The plans are flexible to adapt to type, location, intensity and frequency of services based on tenants' changing needs and preferences.
- Plans include transition planning.
- Plans identify a primary contact for the tenant who coordinates services and ensures that supports are meeting the needs of the household.
- Service plans are reviewed regularly.

A core housing-related services set is offered to all tenants.

- Services offered include:
- Education on roles, rights, and responsibilities as a tenant and those of the property manager/landlord
- Assistance with maintaining key relationships with the property managers and neighbors
- Advocacy to prevent eviction when housing is at risk
- Prevention and early identification of behaviors that may jeopardize continued housing
- Assistance with maintaining services and supports, including applying for benefits to retain housing
- Supporting the building of natural housing supports and resources in the community

Additional support services, beyond the core set of housing-related services, are available either through the service provider or through referrals.[1]

- Tenants have a choice in how they want to receive these services.
- When services are offered through referral to another agency, the designated site-based service provider ensures that:
  - Referrals are made and responded to in a timely manner to ensure that people can begin to receive the service relatively quickly.
  - Referrals are made to providers that have experience and proven success in working well with people experiencing homelessness.

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[1] A list of Additional support services are included in Appendix B.

o   Referrals are made to culturally specific providers when requested.
•   Supportive housing site-based service providers targeting people with mental illness/substance have a licensed mental health professional available to meet with tenants. The mental health professional may be an employee of the service provider, contracted as a consultant or regularly available through a Memorandum of Understanding with a behavioral health organization. The mental health professional provides behavioral health services to tenants (temporarily or ongoing), connect the person to community behavioral health resources and complete diagnostic assessments and disability verifications.

Tenant choice in services is emphasized and required.

•   Tenants will have a choice in which services they receive and how to receive services. This includes:
   o   Where to receive services—sites should offer both on- and off-site options for services
   o   How to engage in services, including scheduled meetings, drop-in times/open office hours and group activities
   o   Who provides their services (agency and staff person)
   o   Which services to engage in, if any
   o   These options are clearly and continuously communicated to tenants.

Sites have multiple options for tenants to engage in meaningful connections during the day.

•   This may include:
   o   Site-based activities to build community within the building
   o   Opportunities to engage in the broader community
   o   Facilitated access to volunteering opportunities
   o   Regular access to education and employment supports

Equity is a core value in service provision.
•   Service providers use an antiracist approach and incorporate cultural considerations into all programming, including considerations for serving LGBTQ+ tenants. •   Best practice for all site-based supportive housing service providers is to follow the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care.

If children are living on the property, services geared specifically toward children and families will be provided.
•   Supportive services and service plans are family-centered, not designed to just serve the adults in the family. •   Programming is on-site so that all children can have access even if their parents do not want to participate.

Transition services are available.
•   Tenants who have resolved their instability to the point of no longer needing services, or who otherwise choose to move on from the supportive housing site, are supported to move on to other housing that better fits their needs.

PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR SITE-BASED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES

Advocates are available to cover any gaps in individualized services.
- People are offered services immediately when they move in   - People receive services through the site-based provider in the case of any delays in verifying eligibility or otherwise accessing individual services.   - Services are available if people lose eligibility for individual services for any reason.   - Services are available as needed to work with individuals/families that are not eligible for, or refuse, other services.   - Site-based providers complete a service plan for the individual/family if they do not have a plan through their individualized services.
Community building activities and programming are regularly available to all tenants.
- Activities are tenant-driven to support strong communities and housing stability.   - Activities may include: - Meals/get togethers   - Tenant groups   - Outings   - Programs/activities   - Educational opportunities   - Cultural programming
Services are available to respond to crises in a timely manner.
- Services can address time-sensitive issues when the household's primary service provider staff is unavailable.   - Staff can provide real-time mediation between tenants and/or property management.

STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Delineating the roles and responsibilities of different categories of staff is important for ensuring that site-based supportive housing is successful. Property management and service providers will have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that includes:

- Descriptions of each entity's roles and responsibilities.
- A plan for regular communication to address any issues or concerns, including:
- Forums for all partners to discuss the status of the project, their roles and the coordination of their efforts on a regular basis.
- Established procedures for communication between scheduled meetings.
- A plan for addressing lease violations and preventing evictions.

Plans will be reviewed and revised annually by all partners.

Appendix [XXXX] includes a table outlining recommended roles for property management and service providers.

> **Lead service provider:** Ensures that a comprehensive array of supportive services is designed and delivered to tenants.
>
> **Property management:** Is responsible for day-to-day operations of the project once it is completed and is key to the financial and physical viability of the project. [1]

PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property management aligns with core values of supportive housing.
• Property management uses a Housing First approach. • Property management ensures interactions with tenants are trauma-informed. • Property management has someone with supportive housing experience on staff.
Property management build ongoing, positive relationships with tenants, not simply responding to issues or crises.
• Staff are available at regularly scheduled times including non-business hours. • Staff are accessible and in regular communication with tenants.
Property management have clear policies for communicating with tenants and service providers that include multiple methods of communication.
• All property management communications and documents related to property rules and policies will be made available in multiple formats to meet accessibility needs, including multiple languages. • Accommodations for literacy needs are made, such as using plain language and providing assistance with reading.

Training plans that include onboarding and continuous education are in place for all property management staff in contact with tenants.

• Training plans are updated at least annually to incorporate new learnings and opportunities.
• Training requirements for non-service staff including property management, front desk, caretakers and volunteers who interact with tenants are to include:
    ○ Trauma-informed approaches
    ○ Mental health "first aid"
    ○ Homelessness 101
    ○ Equity training, including antiracism and implicit bias
    ○ Housing First
    ○ Harm reduction
    ○ Mandated reporter and/or vulnerable adult training
    ○ First aid and CPR, including responding to overdoses
    ○ Self-care

Property management-related quantitative outcomes are tracked and included in quality improvement efforts.
• Property management-related measures may include: • Rate of unit turnovers • Safety-related measures • Amount of bad debt write-offs • Tenant application acceptance rate and reasons for denials

PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Peers/people with lived experience are part of the supportive housing team.
• A conscious effort is made to support and promote peers/people with lived experience to leadership roles. • Volunteering and mentoring opportunities within the site are available for tenants.
Training plans that include onboarding and continuous education are in place for all staff.

• Training plans should be updated at least annually to incorporate new learnings and opportunities.
• Service provider staff are trained in compliance with the *2018 CoC Training Curriculum - Core Content* document. These trainings include:
    ○ Client Centric Practices and Engaging Difficult Clients
    ○ Ethics and Boundaries
    ○ Diversity
    ○ Rapid Rehousing
    ○ Trauma Informed Care
    ○ Equity/Race
    ○ Harm Reduction
    ○ Definitions of Homelessness
    ○ Housing First
    ○ Motivational Interviewing
    ○ Self-Care / Minimizing Secondary Trauma

• Additional trainings for supportive service staff should include:
      o Mandated reporter and/or vulnerable adult training
      o First aid and CPR, including responding to overdoses

Behavioral health clinical consultation is available for service providers targeting people with mental illness/substance use.
• Providers have at least one licensed mental health professional either on staff, contracted as a consultant, or regularly available through a Memorandum of Understanding with a behavioral health organization.   • The consultant serves as a resource and support for other staff.   • Consultations may be provided virtually.
Background checks are completed for all staff with direct contact with tenants.
• There is a process to accommodate people with lived experience or others who have demonstrated a commitment to change.   • Supportive housing sites located on reservations will follow background check practices as determined by the Tribe.
A fully implemented, up-to-date quality improvement plan is in place.
• Staff have dedicated time to quality improvement.   • There is a designated quality improvement lead staff. Where possible, this staff is separate from the team that is in daily contact with tenants.   • Tenant feedback is continuously sought and implemented, using a variety of engagement techniques, outreach methods and communication modes.   • There is a tenant council, focus group or another tenant-led group that meets regularly with the supportive housing project partners.   • Staff document and communicate responses to feedback and any changes made as a result of the feedback.
Quantitative outcomes are tracked, with housing stability as the primary outcome measure tracked.[2]

• Quality improvement plans include at least one goal in each of the following categories:
      o Tenants are satisfied with the services and housing.
      o Tenants increase their income and employment.
      o Tenants improve their physical and mental health.
      o Tenants have social and community connections.
 • All outcomes and quality measures are tracked using disaggregated data by race, gender, etc.

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[2] A successful housing stability outcome means that the individual or family served is still in supportive housing, or has moved to other permanent housing, after one year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUNDERS

Throughout the stakeholder feedback process, stakeholders made suggestions about how funders could better support site-based supportive housing. Some recommendations pertain directly to funding supportive housing programs, while others are related to addressing systemic issues that make it difficult to run quality supportive housing programs.

1. **Cultivate property management resources that are mission-driven and responsive to the needs of supportive housing residents.** There is a need for property management entities that are dedicated to working with, and keeping housed, people who have experienced homelessness. There is a particular need for more culturally competent management and management entities in rural Minnesota.

2. **Funders should collaborate to understand individual community needs, address gaps in supportive housing stock and work to provide a broad array of housing types and approaches.** A Housing First approach is the expectation for programs and the overall goal for homeless response systems. However, supportive housing tenants expressed a desire for more choice when it comes to housing. To truly have choice for people, communities should have exceptions in place to include with varying levels of approach to substance use or service participation requirements. In these cases, it is important that tenants have real, informed choice between options and expectations are clearly presented prior to move in. People should receive support to transition between sites or programs if it does not work out.

   Funders should also consider that Housing First does not need to be a single standard. It is comprised of a number of fidelity measures which can be met to meet the model.

3. **Additional standards should not be implemented without increased, dedicated funding.** Stakeholders identified certain activities as critical to site-based supportive housing but noted that they can be difficult to fund given existing sources. Funding should also be flexible to meet needs that change over time.

   The following **funding needs** were identified by stakeholders as particularly difficult to fund:
   - Operating activities
   - Front desk
   - Security staffing and equipment
   - Resources for technology acquisition and maintenance, particularly to improve communications with tenants
   - Community building activities
   - Optional ways to communicate with tenants and staff (more space, virtual options, etc.)
   - Higher maintenance needs

- Tenant service coordination
- Administrative staffing and activities
- Additional funding for travel needed for transportation/services in Greater Minnesota
- Services
- Base amount of flexible funding to fill gaps of nonbillable services (onboarding time, lapses in eligibility, people who are not eligible, services that are nonbillable, no-shows, supervision)
- Additional service funding pool needed if children are living at the property
- Cultural engagement, programming and community building

4. **The cost of training staff should be considered when funding new developments.** This needs to include the costs of the training itself, staff time for the trainees and staff time to cover staffing at the building while others are being trained. Supportive housing funders should consider investing in developing and supporting quality training opportunities, particularly those that move beyond entry level/beginners.

5. **More staff on the development and funding side should be from communities of color.** Agencies should have a position on their team who are tasked with ensuring funding and standards meet the needs of communities of color.

6. **Supportive housing funders should invest in workforce development to support more people of color entering the field.** This should include efforts to support developers and providers in increasing pay for supportive housing staff.

7. **The Stewardship Council should develop a plan to implement these standards.** The plan should address new and existing sites and incorporate ways to ensure flexibility for local area and individual funder's needs and priorities.

   The fully implemented standards should include measurable indicators to assess fidelity/compliance. By using a variety of measurable indicators along with a composite score the standards can accommodate a range of housing and service models by establishing a minimum composite score. Doing this an individual site may score low on some measures but can still maintain fidelity if they score high on other measures.

8. **Supportive housing funders should explore the feasibility of requiring** the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care for all site-based supportive housing providers.

To develop these standards, we reviewed existing literature regarding supportive housing in Minnesota, as well as documents detailing supportive housing best practices on a national level (see Appendix A for a list of sources and summary of background research); conducted four stakeholder feedback sessions in August and September 2021; attended the Regional Experts Network (REN) September meeting to gather input from people with lived experience; attended the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative (MTC) September meeting to gather input from Native stakeholders and stakeholders who work with Tribal Nations; attended Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence Based Practice Stakeholders and Housing with Support for Adults with Serious Mental Illness Grantee Learning Collaborative; conducted an online post-meeting survey to provide another opportunity for stakeholder input (see Appendix F for a summary of survey responses); and checked in regularly with the Stewardship Council.

After completing a draft of this document, it was shared with the stakeholders who participated in a feedback session and the Stewardship Council for further feedback and input. NorthStar then made revisions based on the feedback received.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK SESSIONS

The stakeholder feedback sessions were 1.5-hour sessions held via Zoom and open to anyone involved in site-based supportive housing. The first two sessions were for stakeholders in the Twin Cities metro area, and the last two sessions were for stakeholders in Greater Minnesota, although all sessions were open to anyone regardless of geography if they were not able to make it to another session.

Feedback sessions incorporated the use of Aha Slides, an online presentation tool that allows participants to share their responses and opinions in real-time during the meeting. In addition, stakeholders participated in two breakout room sessions where they could share their thoughts regarding four sub-topics related to operating activities and services. The operating activities breakout room topics were:

- Best practices/challenges
- Funding operations
- Special considerations
- Equity

The services breakout room topics were:

- Quality measures and outcomes
- Staff qualifications and training
- Service levels
- Equity

Breakout rooms were facilitated by NorthStar consultants and Stewardship Council members, and participants were able to move between rooms if they wanted to. In addition, participants were able to contribute via the Zoom chat or by unmuting themselves and speaking.

The REN, PSH EBP and MTC presentations were structured similarly to the stakeholder feedback sessions but condensed to fit the shorter amount of time allotted.

APPENDIX B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below designates the level of responsibility that each participating entity has in ensuring the availability and quality of each activity:

- Primary: Sole entity responsible for ensuring standards
- Secondary: Assists primary entity with some or all the requirements
- Shared: Works collaboratively with partners to ensure standards are met
- None: Does not play a significant role in this activity

When responsibility is assigned to an entity, it does not necessarily mean that they are directly providing the service or activity. For instance, the designated service provider is primarily responsible for the core housing-related services. They may provide those directly or, if the tenant chooses, they may connect them to another service provider to receive those services. They should be working with the tenant, however, to help them understand their options and assist with making the necessary connections.

		Property management	Designated service provider
Services	Service planning	None	Primary
	Core housing-related services	None	Primary
	Additional support services	None	Primary
Operating Activities	Security and safety	Primary	Secondary
	Tenant application and intake	Primary	Secondary
	Leasing	Primary	None
	Amenities	Primary	Secondary
	Community building	Secondary	Primary
	Building maintenance	Primary	None
	New tenant orientation	Primary	Secondary
	Governance	Primary	Secondary
	Tenant service coordination	None	Primary
	Front desk	Secondary	Primary

In fall 2021, North Star Policy Consulting worked with the Minnesota Supportive Housing Stewardship Council to establish supportive housing standards for site-based supportive housing settings financed by Minnesota Housing and its funding partners, with a future goal of addressing funding alignment aimed at strengthening the supportive housing infrastructure statewide. As part of this process, North Star Policy Consulting reviewed existing literature regarding supportive housing in Minnesota, as well as documents detailing supportive housing best practices on a national level, to inform the recommended supportive housing standards proposed in this document. Information relevant to the six focus areas of this project—defining "operating" v. "services" activities, service packages and standards, operating requirements and standards, staff qualifications and training, outcomes and performance benchmarks, and equity—is summarized in this appendix. The background documents reviewed in this summary are listed below.

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). (2013). *Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing*. Corporation for Supportive Housing.

Heading Home. (2015). *Approaches to Housing and Services for Long-Term Homeless Households*. Heading Home.

Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), & Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC). (2020). *Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing*. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

MESH, & Abt. (2018). *CoC Training Curriculum—Core Content*. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

Metro Services Funding Workgroup. (2010). *One Size May Not Fit All: Exploring the Frequency & Configuration of Services in Supportive Housing*. Metro Services Funding Workgroup.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2010). *Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence-Based Practices (EBP KIT)* (HHS Pub. No. SMA-10-4509). Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

DEFINING "OPERATING" V. "SERVICES" ACTIVITIES

The background documents do not delineate or define "operating" versus "services" activities for supportive housing. However, the 2010 Metro Services Funding Workgroup (MSFW) *One Size May Not Fit All: Exploring the Frequency & Configuration of Services in Supportive Housing* report does reference that front desk staffing is an *operating* activity and should not be considered when discussing supportive housing *services*.

The Minnesota Housing Supportive Housing webpage defines services as any support services that are "necessary to improve [tenants'] wellbeing, such as employability, self-sufficiency, and other positive social outcomes." Based on this definition of services and the activities discussed in the

background documents, in this document we will be considering operating activities to be those activities that are required for the property as a whole to function smoothly, and services activities to be those activities that help an individual household succeed in housing.

2. SERVICE PACKAGES AND STANDARDS

SERVICE PACKAGES

The Heading Home (HH) *Approaches to Housing and Services for Long-Term Homeless Households* (2015) document lists menus of services recommended for different subsets of clients. These service sets are a basic service set, service set for children, mental health service set, traumatic brain injury service set, chemical health service set, and physical disability service set. A copy of these service sets, including the menu of services recommended, is included in Appendix B of this document.

The 2010 Metro Services Funding Workgroup (MSFW) *One Size May Not Fit All: Exploring the Frequency & Configuration of Services in Supportive Housing* report recommends different levels of services, including intensive/moderate support, step-down supportive, aftercare services, and no services. These service levels were intended to correspond to service rates.

The 2020 Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) *Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing* report also lists services that are provided by the supportive housing agencies who were consulted in the creation of the report. From the focus groups conducted for the report, tenants identified that the services most helpful to maintaining their housing were case management services, on-site support groups such as Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, off-site services that provide assistance with transportation, off-site services that provide assistance with food, and access to computers. Focus group participants also emphasized the need for more education- and employment-related services.

SERVICE STANDARDS

A common theme throughout the documents reviewed is ensuring that services allow for and emphasize tenant choice. This is consistent with a Housing First approach, which the documents also emphasize as best practice. The 2020 MHFA *Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing* report's second recommendation is, "Encourage enhanced choice of housing and services based on tenants' needs and preferences," and emphasizes taking a tenant-driven, "person-centered, trauma-informed, culturally competent and Housing First" approach in the provision of supportive housing (page 10). Similarly, the 2010 MSFW *One Size* and 2015 HH *Approaches to Housing* documents also emphasize tenant choice. Based on the focus groups conducted for the 2020 MHFA report, tenant choice should include choice of services to receive, choice of service delivery location, and choice of service providers, including being able to choose the gender of the staff providing the service when feasible. In addition, focus group participants mentioned that it would be helpful to know of all services available.

Services provided and the structure of service provision is likely to differ between supportive housing providers based on whether they take a Housing First, Safe Haven, or Program Housing approach.

From the HH *Approach to Housing* report, Housing First providers first ensure that the people they work with have a place to live, and then focus on service provision. There are no requirements to entry and no requirements to participate in services. Safe Haven programs also have fewer requirements for entry and stay, but they are targeted towards hard-to-reach homeless people experiencing severe mental illness or other behavioral health conditions who have been unwilling or unable to access supportive services. They do not require tenants to sign a lease and usually serve as transitional housing with the goal of tenant transitioning into (more) permanent housing. In contrast, Program Housing requires participation in services as a condition of residency, and often also has requirements for entry. Sober housing is an example of Program Housing.

CONCERNS

The tenant outreach conducted as part of the MHFA *Evaluation* report revealed several concerns regarding service provision in supportive housing. From their tenant survey, they found that 18% of respondents reported not having a service plan, and 19% of respondents did not know whether they had one. While 64% of white tenants reported having a service plan, only 56% of tenants of color reported the same. In addition, more tenants of color than white tenants reported needing and not receiving services in the areas of employment, case management, services for children, transportation, recreational activities, medication management, and physical health.

Service providers surveyed for the MHFA report also identified concerns around service provision. 54% of service providers reported that transportation is a barrier to providing services to tenants, which participants in the tenant focus groups also identified as an issue. Another issue highlighted by the service provider survey was that while the majority of service providers (over 70%) said "that they always provide choices to tenants regarding supportive services," 10% of service providers shared that "they never provide choices of supportive services" (page 44). Additionally, one third of service providers reported that tenants are never given a choice of who provides the services. Lack of tenant choice in service provision goes against Housing First and supportive housing principles.

3. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

Under operations, the background documents focus on property-related services and rules, and tenant selection and screening, although these are not explicitly named as being operating activities.

PROPERTY-RELATED SERVICES AND RULES

Property-related services discussed in the documents focus on front desk staff, security staff, property management, and maintenance, but also include tenant meetings for purposes such as community building or to address tenant concerns and share changes to rules. Both the 2020 MHFA report and 2015 HH report discuss the positive impact of having front desk staff: having front desk staff improves property safety and the overall safety and wellbeing of the community, according to the respondents to the Property Management Survey conducted for the 2020 MHFA report. The 2015 HH report mentions that front desk services provide monitoring and security and may work with property management and service providers on building issues. In addition, front desk staff may also be service providers who connect tenants to resources and help build community. These documents begin to

explore the different roles of front desk staff and the different ways this operations activity can be structured. The 2010 MSFW report mentioned that front desk staffing would not be a focus of the document as it is an operations activity, and the focus of this document was on services.

Security staff are also discussed in the 2020 MHFA report and the tenant focus groups that were conducted for that report. Tenants expressed that not having staff, particularly security staff, on-site 24/7 can create an unsafe environment. Similarly, they reported that property management staff having limited hours can also be an issue for those who are not able to report property issues during business hours. Tenants also did not like it when property management and the service provider were not affiliated and did not have strong communication with each other as it makes it harder for concerns to be addressed.

In addition to staffing, tenant focus group participants expressed an interest in operations staff hosting monthly tenant meetings to address tenant concerns and explain rule changes.

Lastly, tenant focus group participants brought up property rules. In particular, several tenants spoke negatively of properties with strict guest policies. Some tenants mentioned that they were unaware of what type of property they were moving into prior to the move--for example, some tenants were unaware that they were being referred to sober housing until subjected to sobriety tests, and some tenants in these situations expressed that they wished they had been given a choice in property.

TENANT SELECTION AND SCREENING CRITERIA

Another aspect of operations is tenant selection and screening. The 2010 HH report identifies that tenant selection and screening varies between Housing First, Safe Haven, and Program Housing approaches to supportive housing provision, where Housing First and Safe Haven have minimal or no barriers to entry, whereas program housing may have barriers to entry such as needing to pass sobriety tests at the time of entry.

The 2020 MHFA report delves deeper into tenant selection and screening criteria. This report emphasizes that providers should minimize barriers to accessing supportive housing, such as screening out applicants based on criminal backgrounds, low incomes, no credit/bad credit, and limited or poor rental histories. When asked about reasons applicants were denied at majority-supportive housing properties, the most frequently reported reason property staff identified was applicants having criminal records/backgrounds (24%), followed by applicants not meeting eligibility for supportive housing units because of funder requirements (22%), not having the documentation to qualify for the supportive housing unit (21%), having poor rental histories (11%), and not meeting property-imposed eligibility requirements (11%).

A related concern identified in the 2020 MHFA report is the change in supportive housing target population from long-term homeless to high priority homeless (identified through the coordinated entry system) in 2018. The report covered common difficulties with working with the coordinated entry system.

Tenants who participated in focus groups for the 2020 MHFA report expressed that having assistance with their move-in was an operations activity that they appreciated.

4. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

TRAININGS

In 2017, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency contracted with MESH and Abt to identify CoC training needs and topics, which are presented in the *2018 CoC Training Curriculum - Core Content* document. The document provides detailed recommendations for trainings on the following 11 topics, which are recommended for CoC staff in Minnesota:

- Client Centric Practices and Engaging Difficult Clients
- Ethics and Boundaries
- Diversity
- Rapid Rehousing
- Trauma Informed Care
- Equity/Race
- Harm Reduction
- Definitions of Homelessness
- Housing First
- Motivational Interviewing
- Self-Care / Minimizing Secondary Trauma

While the CoC Training Curriculum focuses more on best practices for working with people experiencing homelessness, the 2010 SAMHSA *Permanent Supportive Housing: Training Frontline Staff* document focuses on providing staff with trainings directly related to delivering supportive housing services. This document breaks trainings into six modules:

- Core elements of Permanent Supportive Housing
- Outreach and engagement
- Helping people find and acquire housing
- Connecting tenants to benefits and community-based services
- Directly providing supports for housing retention
- Addressing additional special needs

QUALIFICATIONS

The documents do not cover recommendations for staff qualifications beyond a sample job description in the 2010 SAMHSA *Permanent Supportive Housing: Building Your Program* document, which lists the following under "Qualifications:"

- "Bachelor's degree preferred, preferably in the social sciences or human services field. Experience can be substituted for formal education.
- One year's experience working with special needs populations.

- Valid driver's license and clean driving record.
- Availability to work flexible hours to provide on-call support and respond to after-hours concerns and emergencies" (page 112).

Having staff with lived experience can also be beneficial to supportive housing programs: the 2020 MHFA report mentions that tenant focus group participants identified that they would prefer working with staff who have gone through a similar experience.

5. OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS

The 2013 CSH *Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing Guidebook* focuses on defining positive outcomes and measures of quality for supportive housing. The guidebook outlines the following five "Positive Supportive Housing Outcomes" (page 2):

- Tenants stay housed
- Tenants are satisfied with the services and housing
- Tenants increase their income and employment
- Tenants improve their physical and mental health
- Tenants have social and community connections

Further, the document presents five Dimensions of Quality that all successful supportive housing projects should meet:

- "Tenant-Centered—Every aspect of housing focuses on meeting tenants' needs
- Accessible—Tenants of all backgrounds and abilities enter housing quickly and easily
- Coordinated—All supportive housing partners work to achieve shared goals
- Integrated—Housing provides tenants with choices and community connections
- Sustainable—Housing operates successfully for the long term" (page 4)

Based on these measures, CSH has built multiple tools for evaluating the quality of supportive housing. These include the Quality Self-Assessment Tool, Commitment to Quality Checklist, Supportive Housing Quality Toolkit, CSH Quality Endorsement, CSH Quality Supportive Housing Certification Process, and Intro to Quality Supportive Housing Training. Of these resources and tools, the Quality Self-Assessment Tool and Commitment to Quality Checklist stand out as being relevant and easy to use for evaluating majority-supportive housing properties.

Another tool for evaluating the quality of supportive housing mentioned in the background documents is the PSH Service Fidelity Standards created by SAMHSA and referenced in the 2020 MHFA report. The SAMHSA document includes a Fidelity Scoresheet that scores supportive housing agencies based on seven dimensions, plus several indicators under each dimension. These dimensions are:

- Choice of housing
- Separation of housing and services
- Decent, safe, and affordable housing
- Housing integration

- Rights of tenancy
- Access to housing
- Flexible, voluntary services

6. EQUITY

Through its tenant surveys and tenant focus groups, the 2020 MHFA report highlighted disparities facing people of color in supportive housing settings. These disparities are in the services tenants reported receiving, being given a choice in housing, and in representation across different types of supportive housing.

Tenants of color reported receiving most services at a lower rate than white tenants. In addition, tenants of color were more likely than white tenants to report needing certain services and not receiving them.

When it came to being given a choice of type of property (mixed versus majority/only supportive housing units), specific buildings/properties, apartments/units, who they could live with, and neighborhoods, white tenants were more likely to report having been given a choice in these areas than tenants of color.

Lastly, the MHFA report found that "people who are American Indian or Alaska Native are overrepresented in majority-[supportive housing] properties compared to other racial and ethnic groups" (page 48). The authors hypothesize that this may be because there are majority-supportive housing properties built on Tribal lands or that were specifically designed to serve Native people in urban areas. They note that "other racial and ethnic groups are relatively evenly distributed across property types" (page 48).

Basic Service Set: the set of services that is recommended to be available for all households experiencing long-term homelessness.

- **Population:**
  - Single adults
  - Youth
  - Families with children
- **Services:**
  - Case Management
  - Family-Specific Services
  - Housing Supports
  - Independent Living Skills
  - Transportation
  - Education/Employment
  - Safety (e.g., domestic abuse services, legal advocacy)
  - Harm Reduction Strategies
  - Financial Management
  - Self-Determination/Life Satisfaction
  - Health
  - Veterans Benefits and Services

Service Set for Children: additional recommended services if a program serves children.

- **Population:**
  - Youth
  - Families with children
- **Services:**
  - Case Management
  - Advocacy
  - Academic Programs
  - Computer Labs
  - Recreational Programming
  - Mental Health
  - Chemical Health
  - Mentoring
  - Employment Training
  - Post-secondary
  - Physical Health
  - Transportation
  - Assessment and Planning Services

Mental Health Service Set: services in addition to Basic Service Set recommended for people with mental health issues; some of these services are considered evidence-based practice.

- **Population:**
  - Single adults
  - Youth
  - Families with children
- **Services:**

- o Crisis Planning and Intervention
- o Diagnostic Assessment
- o Employment/Vocational Services for Persons with Mental Illness
- o Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- o Individual Community Support Plan
- o
- o Individual Service Plans (ISP)
- o Community-Based Mental Health Services
- o Rehabilitative Mental Health Services
- o Physician Mental Health Services
- o Treatments

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Service Set: services in addition to the basic service set recommended for people with traumatic brain injury.

- • **Population:**
  - o Single adults
  - o Youth
  - o Families with children
- • **Services:**
  - o Employment/Vocational Services for Persons with Brain Injury
  - o Individual Education Plan (IEP)
  - o Medical Assistance Home and Community-Based Waivers (e.g., TBI, CADI, CAC, DD, and EW waivers)
  - o TBI-Specific Services:
    - ▪ Neurologist and neuropsychological evaluation
    - ▪ Medication management
    - ▪ Psychologist/Psychiatrist familiar with brain injury
    - ▪ Cognitive rehabilitation
    - ▪ Independent living skills instructions for TBI
    - ▪ Specialized chemical dependency treatment for persons with cognitive impairments
    - ▪ Behavioral programming
    - ▪ Advocacy for benefits, rights, individual needs
    - ▪ Brain injury support group

Chemical Health Service Set: services in addition to the basic service set recommended for people with chemical health issues.

- • **Population:**
  - o Single adults
  - o Youth
  - o Families with children
- • **Services:**

- o Consolidated Chemical Dependency Treatment Fund - providing treatment and extended rehabilitation. Can include the following services:
  - Recover readiness services
  - Relapse prevention and recovery planning
  - Individual and group counseling for substance abuse
  - Methadone maintenance
  - Harm reduction strategies
  - Detoxification service
  - Inpatient rehabilitation
  - Self-help groups such as AA or NA
  - Sober recreational activities

Physical Disability Service Set: services in addition to the basic service set recommended for people with physical disabilities.

- **Population:**
  - o Single adults
  - o Youth
  - o Families with children
- **Services:**
  - o Accessible Housing, Transportation, and Services
  - o Employment/Vocational Services Specific for People with Physical Disabilities
  - o Individual Education Plan (IEP)
  - o Medical Assistance Home and Community-Based Waivers (e.g., CADI, CAC, TBI, and EW waivers)

Co-occurring Disorders (Mental Illness/Chemical Dependency) Service Set: services in addition to the basic service set recommended for people with co-occurring disorders.

- **Population:**
  - o Single adults
  - o Youth
  - o Families with children
- **Services:**
  - o Harm Reduction Strategies
  - o Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
  - o Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT)
  - o Medications
  - o Modified Therapeutic Communities

- AICHO
- Anoka County
- The Arc
- Avivio
- Beacon Interfaith
- Blue Earth County
- Bois Forte
- Boisclair Corporation
- Carver County
- Catholic Charities Twin Cities
- Catholic Charities St. Cloud
- Center City Housing
- City of Hutchinson
- Clay County
- Damiano Center
- Duluth NAACP
- DW Jones
- Experience of Neshema
- Family Promise
- Family Safety Network
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Goodhue County
- Goodwill Easter Seals
- Green House Recovery Center
- Guild Incorporated
- Haven Housing
- Hennepin County
- HousingLink
- HRA of Duluth
- Isanti County
- KOOTASCA
- Lakes and Pines
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
- Mid-MN Community Development Corporation
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Disability Law Center
- Minnesota Tribal Collaborative
- Model Cities
- Neighborhood House
- New Pathways
- Northeast Minnesota Continuum of Care
- Northland Counseling
- Olmsted County
- Perspectives
- Premier Housing Management
- Project for Pride in Living
- Rainbow Health
- Red Lake Housing Authority
- ReEntry House
- Rice County
- Rise Inc.
- RS Eden
- The Salvation Army
- Sanford Health
- Scott County
- Sherburne County
- SOAR Careers
- Solid Ground
- Southwest Mental Health Center
- St. Louis County
- St. Paul Public Schools
- Stearns County
- Three Rivers Community Action Program
- Touchstone Mental Health
- United Community Action Program
- Velair Property Management
- Washington County
- Wayside Residence
- Wilder Foundation
- Women's Rural Advocacy Programs
- YMCA
- YouthLink

The Post-Stakeholder Feedback Session Survey, conducted online via JotForm, was designed to give stakeholders an additional opportunity to provide input regarding supportive housing standards. The link to the survey was provided following each stakeholder feedback session (including the REN Meeting and Minnesota Tribal Collaborative Meeting), as well as via a follow-up email. It is possible that some survey respondents did not attend any stakeholder feedback sessions. Responses were collected between August 26, 2021, and October 18, 2021.

The results are summarized below, followed by a more detailed report of survey results.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The majority of respondents (n=10, 63%) were supportive housing service providers or operations staff, and the remainder of respondents (n=6, 38%) were service providers who work with people who live in supportive housing, but were not affiliated with a supportive housing site. No respondents were current supportive housing residents / people with lived experience.

Which of these options best describes you?
16 Responses
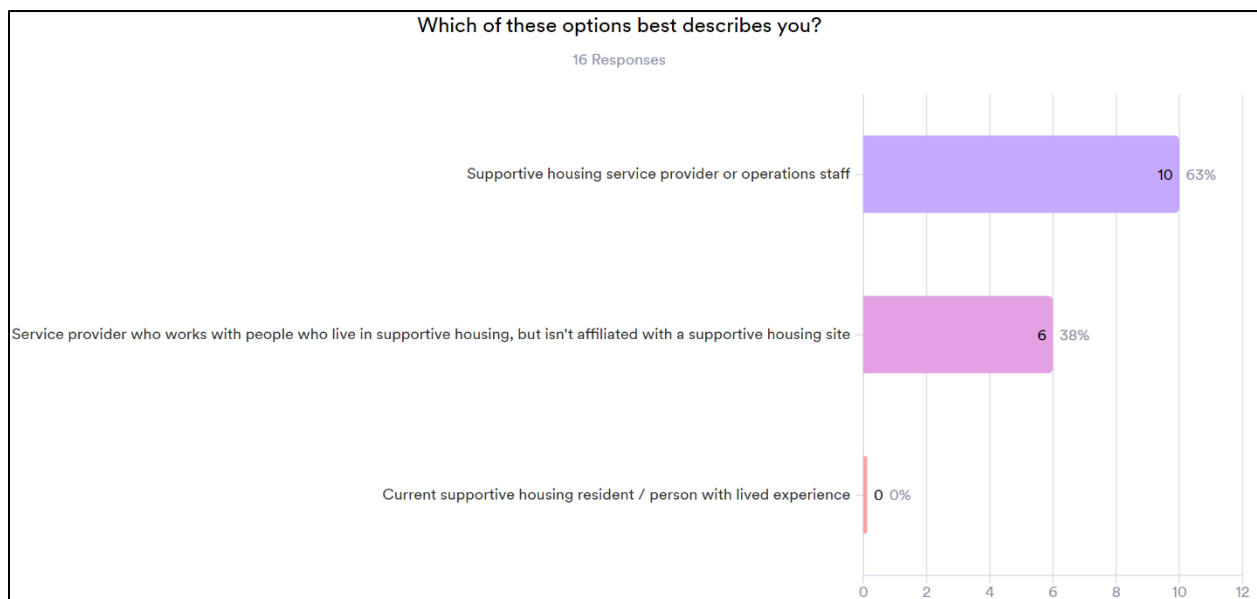
Of those who shared their feedback regarding NorthStar's proposed definitions of operating activities versus services (n=9), most (n=5, 56%) did not have further suggestions.
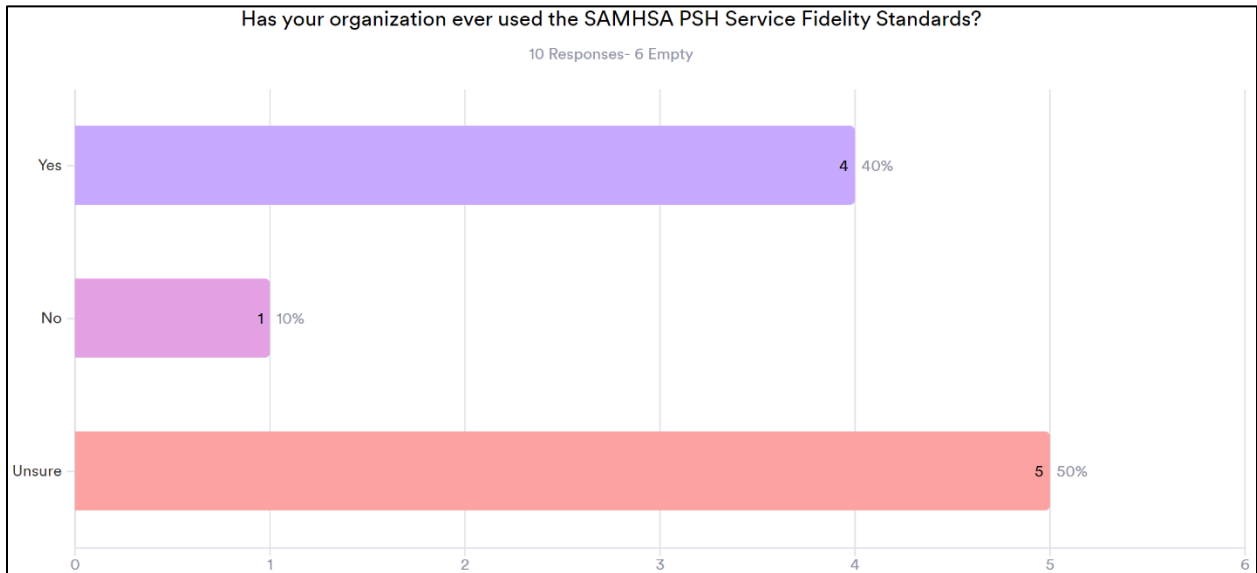
When asked about the importance of providing various services in a supportive housing setting, respondents shared that the following services were the most important to provide, with the first three services being tied for most important:
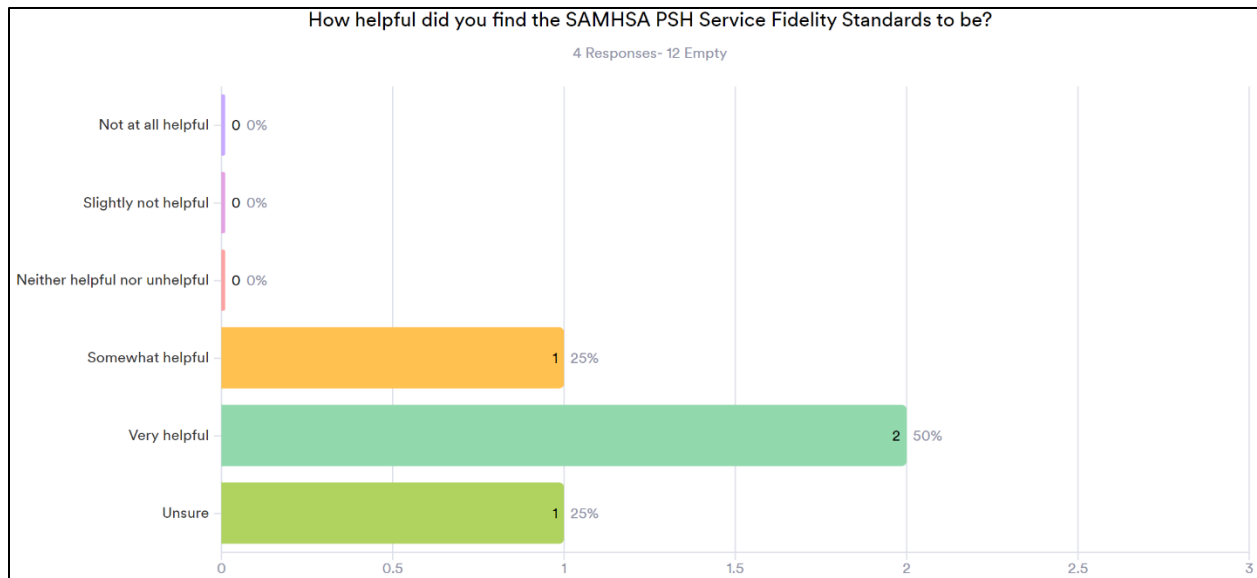
- A case manager, service coordinator or advocate
- Help with getting benefits
- Referrals to community services and resources

- Culturally specific services
- Mental health services

When asked to write in opinions on which services should be provided on-site, 7 people responded, and 3 of them stated that case management should be provided on-site.

The most commonly used service quality standards tool used by the 10 respondents who are supportive housing service providers or operation staff was the SAMHSA PSH Service Fidelity Standards, which 4 respondents (40%) said their agency used. When asked how helpful they found it, 2 (50%) of the 4 respondents said it was very helpful, 1 (25%) said it was somewhat helpful, and 1 (25%) was unsure. Only one respondent reported that their agency had used the CSH Commitment to Quality Checklist, and they found it to be somewhat helpful. No respondents reported that their agency had used the CSH Quality Self-Assessment Tool.

Has your organization ever used the SAMHSA PSH Service Fidelity Standards?
10 Responses- 6 Empty

Yes — 4 40%
No — 1 10%
Unsure — 5 50%

How helpful did you find the SAMHSA PSH Service Fidelity Standards to be?

4 Responses - 12 Empty

Not at all helpful	0	0%
Slightly not helpful	0	0%
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	0	0%
Somewhat helpful	1	25%
Very helpful	2	50%
Unsure	1	25%

When asked to share how important various operating activities are, the most commonly reported must-have was front desk staff (n=10, 63%). The next most important operating activity was tenant meetings for community building, followed by security staff. Assistance with moving in was most commonly viewed as nice to have, but not necessary. The 10 respondents who identified that they were supportive housing service providers or operations staff in the first question were then asked how difficult it is to fund several operating activities. They indicated that front desk staff and security staff are the most difficult operating activities to fund.

The following section asked about trainings. Based on the input of 11 respondents, it is most common for services staff to receive a wide range of trainings, and least common for security staff and front desk staff to receive a wide range of trainings. However, respondents would like to increase the number of trainings that various categories of staff would be required to receive. In particular, respondents would like front desk staff and property management staff to participate in more trainings.

Most respondents (n=10, 63%) reported that they experienced barriers to providing trainings for their agency's staff, the most common of which was difficulty finding affordable trainings (n=8, 50%), followed by difficulty finding on-demand trainings (n=5, 31%) and difficulty finding training on a particular subject (n=5, 31%).

The following section asked about outcomes and performance benchmarks and was only presented to the 10 respondents who identified that they were supportive housing service providers or operations staff in the first question. The first question asked, "How does your organization currently track quality, or what benchmarks for outcomes does your organization use?" Five respondents answered, sharing:

- The SAMHSA PSH Service Fidelity Standards
- Tracking on tenants' housing goals sheets

- Tracking at tenant intake and discharge
- Tenant surveys
- Staff surveys
- Evaluations from funders
- Internal organizational program evaluations
- Length of stay
- Number of unit turns
- Number of police calls
- Amount of bad debt write-offs
- HMIS data quality

Lastly, respondents were asked about practices related to equity. When asked about best practices for ensuring services are working for diverse populations, respondents shared that agencies should hire staff that reflect the population being served, and they also emphasized the importance of providing anti-racism and diversity training to all staff. In addition, a respondent shared that materials should be available in multiple languages, and agencies should make interpreter services available to tenants.

DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS' ROLES AND AGENCY BACKGROUND

The set of questions displayed to survey respondents differed slightly based on the survey respondents' relationship to supportive housing, as identified in the first question, "Which of these options best describes you?" This was to help streamline the survey-taking experience so that respondents would not be shown questions that are irrelevant to their role. The majority of respondents (n=10, 63%) were supportive housing service providers or operations staff, and the remainder of respondents (n=6, 38%) were service providers who work with people who live in supportive housing, but were not affiliated with a supportive housing site. No respondents were current supportive housing residents / people with lived experience. The breakdown of responses to the first question is displayed below.

Which of these options best describes you?
16 Responses

- Supportive housing service provider or operations staff — 10 · 63%
- Service provider who works with people who live in supportive housing, but isn't affiliated with a supportive housing site — 6 · 38%
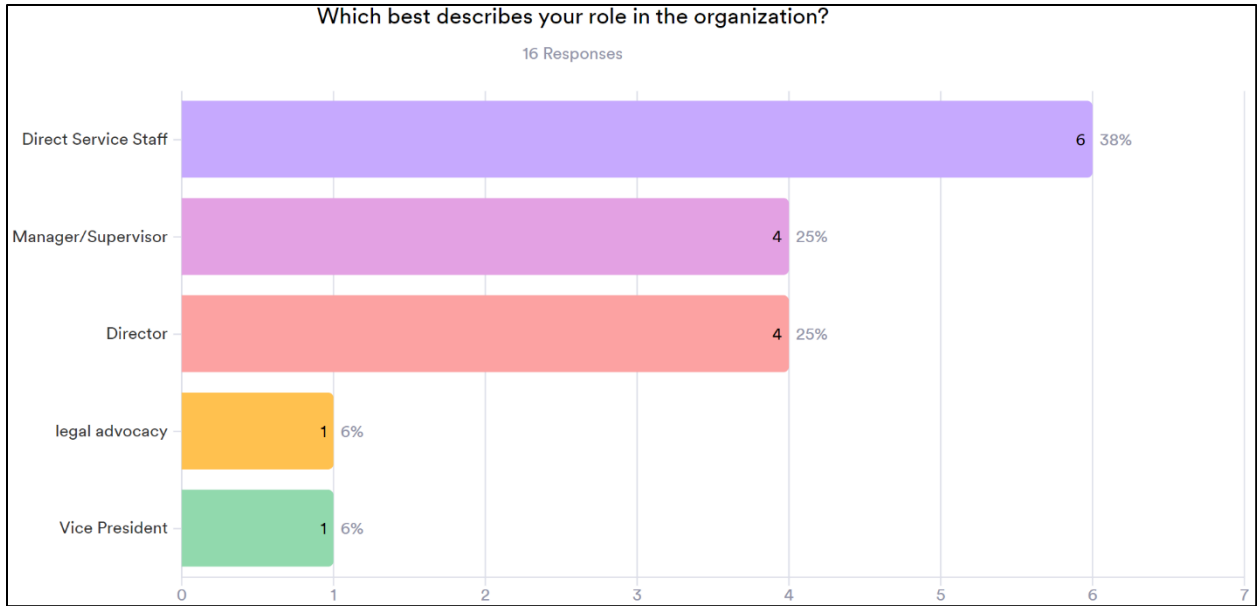- Current supportive housing resident / person with lived experience — 0 · 0%
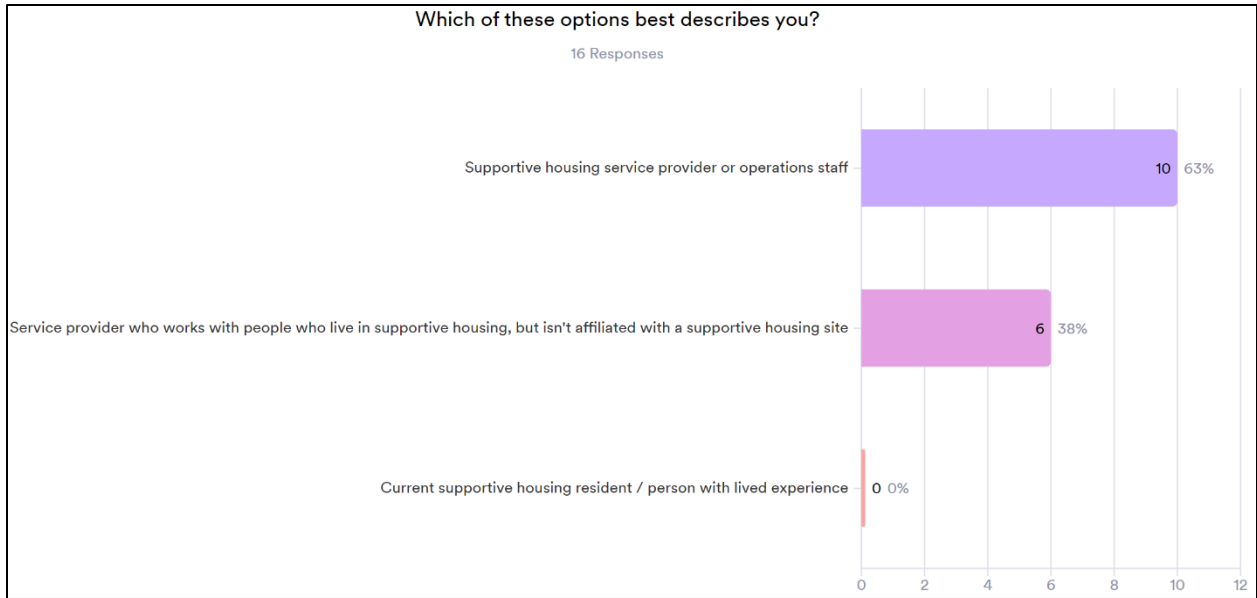
Most respondents (n=11, 69%) worked for an organization that currently operated or provided services at site-based supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Does your organization currently operate or provide services at site-based supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness?
16 Responses

- Yes — 69% · 11
- No — 31% · 5
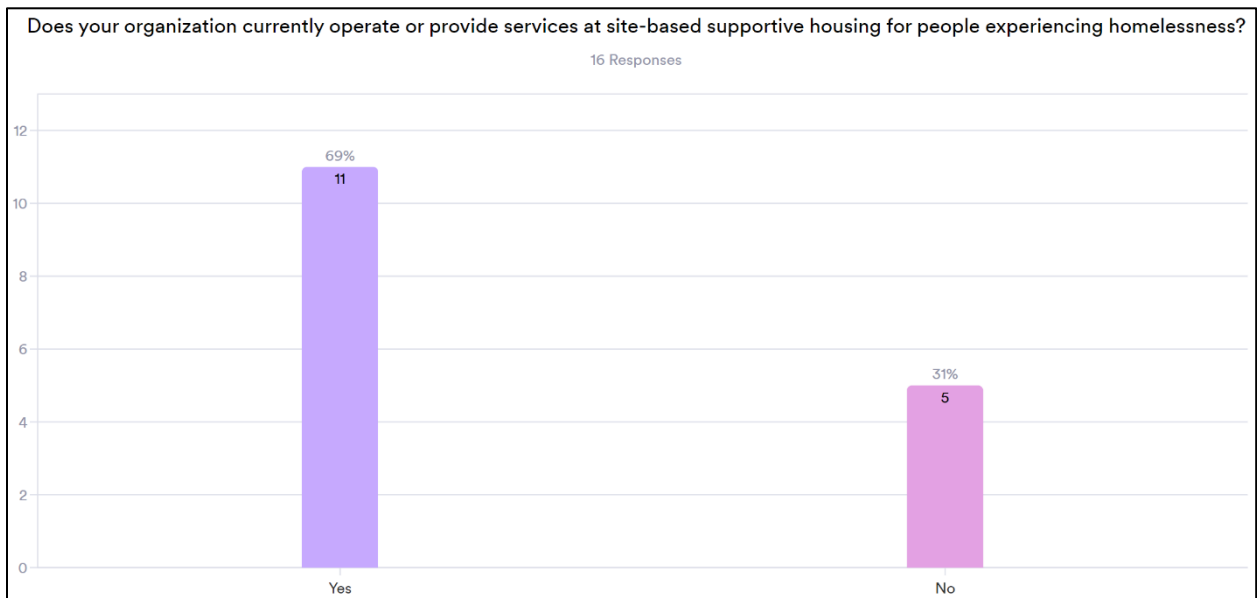
When asked to list their organization's location, 6 respondents (38%) identified that they were based out of the Twin Cities, 4 (25%) were based out of locations in Greater Minnesota, and 1 (6%) worked for a statewide organization. Five people (31%) did not respond.

When asked about their job title, 6 respondents (38%) identified as direct services staff, 4 (25%) identified as a manager/supervisor, 4 (25%) identified as a director, 1 (6%) identified as a vice president, and 1 (6%) identified as legal advocacy staff.

Which best describes your role in the organization?

16 Responses

Direct Service Staff	6 38%
Manager/Supervisor	4 25%
Director	4 25%
legal advocacy	1 6%
Vice President	1 6%

OPERATING V. SERVICES

The next section presented the table delineating operating activities and services, as presented during the stakeholder feedback sessions (included below), and asked whether respondents had any additional feedback regarding the proposed definitions.

Supportive housing operating activities	Supportive housing services
Required for the **property as a whole** to function smoothly	Help **individual households** succeed in housing
Available to all supportive housing residents at the property	Person-centered and individualized to the needs of each household
Above and beyond typical property management OR activities that are specialized due to unique needs of supportive housing	Primary purpose is to help households maintains stable housing
Provided by a designated site-based service provider or property manager	May be provided by designated site-based service provider or another provider, depending on the person's choice
Examples: Front desk services, community building, policies and procedures	Examples: developing a housing stability plan, benefits assistance, service coordination
Additional supportive services: Specialized support to help individual households achieve positive outcomes in all life domains (ex: therapies, parenting skills development, mental health services)	

There were 9 responses to this question, and 7 respondents left it blank. Of the 9 responses, 5 did not have additional feedback, including 2 responses that stated that the definitions were clear. Additional feedback includes:

- "The operating programs are what sustains the housing, the services create the feeling of home and hope."
- "It would be helpful to delineate between the expectation of the service provider and that of the property management - when the tasks are not specified some properties put more and more on the service provider to meet the expectations"
- "If it is included, can the addition of language related to 'Administrative Oversite' be added to 'operations'. I think successful programs have strong, structed Administration setting agency/program culture, philosophy, management practices, policies, and procedures."

- "youth and children's staff"; "often without services for children the households are not successful at maintaining their housing. most children who experienced homelessness have trauma and need extra supports to be successful socially, emotionally and in their education."

SERVICES

The next section gathered stakeholder feedback regarding services standards. The first question asked, "Please rank the importance of providing each service in a supportive housing setting, whether on-site or off-site." Responses to this question are included below (total number of respondents=16).

Please rank the importance of providing each service in a supportive housing setting, whether on-site or off-site.					
	Must have	**Best practice**	**Nice to have**	**Helpful in specific situations**	**Not helpful**
A case manager, service coordinator or advocate	**11 (69%)**	4 (25%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Help with getting benefits	**10 (63%)**	6 (38%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Mental health services	7 (44%)	**8 (50%)**	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Help to keep your home	**7 (44%)**	6 (38%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Transportation services	3 (19%)	6 (38%)	**7 (44%)**	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Physical health services	1 (6%)	5 (31%)	**7 (44%)**	3 (19%)	0 (0%)
Medication management	0 (0%)	**8 (50%)**	3 (19%)	5 (31%)	0 (0%)
Referrals to community services and resources	**11 (69%)**	4 (25%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Money management skills	4 (25%)	**6 (38%)**	4 (25%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Recreational activities or activities to connect with	**6 (38%)**	**6 (38%)**	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

your community or neighborhood					
Services for children	6 (38%)	6 (38%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Peer or recovery supports	5 (31%)	7 (44%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Family services	7 (44%)	6 (38%)	2 (13%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Employment services	5 (31%)	7 (44%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Alcohol or other substances use services	5 (31%)	5 (31%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Help with household chores	0 (0%)	7 (44%)	5 (31%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)
Help with education services	4 (25%)	4 (25%)	6 (38%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Legal services	0 (0%)	9 (56%)	3 (19%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)
Help with activities of daily life	1 (6%)	7 (44%)	6 (38%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Childcare	2 (13%)	4 (25%)	8 (50%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Culturally specific services	11 (69%)	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Based on these responses, the services listed below were deemed the most important using a weighted sum where each "must have" response was worth 1 point, and each "best practice" response was worth 0.5 points:

- A case manager, service coordinator or advocate (score: 13)
- Help with getting benefits (score: 13)
- Referrals to community services and resources (score: 13)
- Culturally specific services (score: 12.5)
- Mental health services (score: 11)

Seven people responded to the following question, "Is it important that any of these services be provided on-site versus off-site? In what circumstances?" Of these responses, 3 mentioned that case management needs to be on-site. Additional responses include:

- "There may be a higher likelihood that some services are used more because they are available on site."
- "Each tenant has specific needs and goals so we try to connect to off site services so that they have choice in their provider and can be culturally specific as requested."
- "On site is preferable if no transportation options are available, but off site can also help integrate people into accessing community services that aren't attached to the housing option, which can expand their support circle."
- "If Daily living skills are offered as [a service], they should be offered on-site, it is best to learn the skill in the environment you will use the skill. Recreational and connection to the community is a best practice to be offered on-site as it is more accessible to all tenants, especially those with barriers to transportation."

One respondent stated that it is not necessary to have staff on-site 24/7, but tenants should be provided with 24-hour crisis numbers and text lines, as well as 24-hour emergency maintenance numbers.

Two respondents provided additional feedback regarding services when asked. One respondent stressed that services need to be individualized, based on the persons' needs and what is important to the person. The other respondent shared that children's programming is imperative in family supportive housing. They explained, "Supporting homeless children to be developmentally on task will impact generational homelessness. Supportive services need to be family centered and not just adult centered for the adults in the families. This programming needs to be on site so that all children can have access even if their parents don't want to participate. Although, it is best to integrate children's services with the whole family to be most successful."
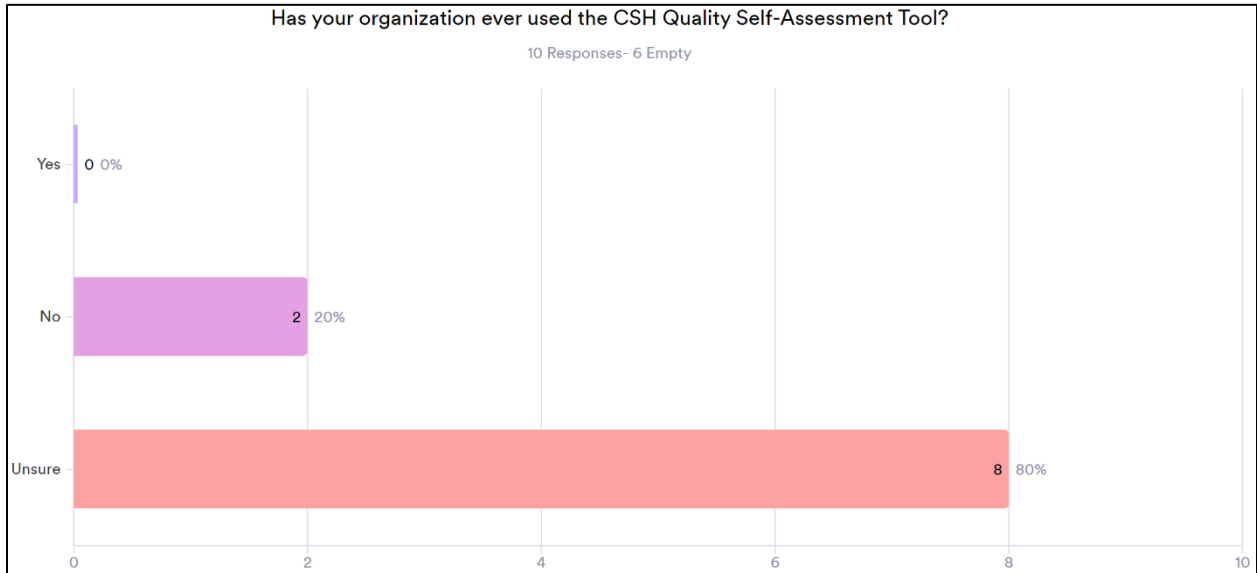
SERVICE QUALITY STANDARDS

The following section asked about service quality standards and was only presented to the 10 respondents who identified that they were supportive housing service providers or operations staff in the first question.

The first question asked whether the respondent's organization has used the CSH Commitment to Quality Checklist and included a link to the tool. Most respondents (n=8, 80%) were unsure whether their organization had used the tool. Only one respondent knew that their organization has used the tool. When asked "How helpful did you find the CSH Commitment to Quality Checklist to be?", the one respondent reported that the tool was somewhat helpful. The possible responses were "not at all helpful," "slightly not helpful," "neither helpful nor unhelpful," "somewhat helpful," "very helpful," and "unsure."

Has your organization used the CSH Commitment to Quality Checklist?
10 Responses- 6 Empty

|	
Yes	1 10%
No	1 10%
Unsure	8 80%
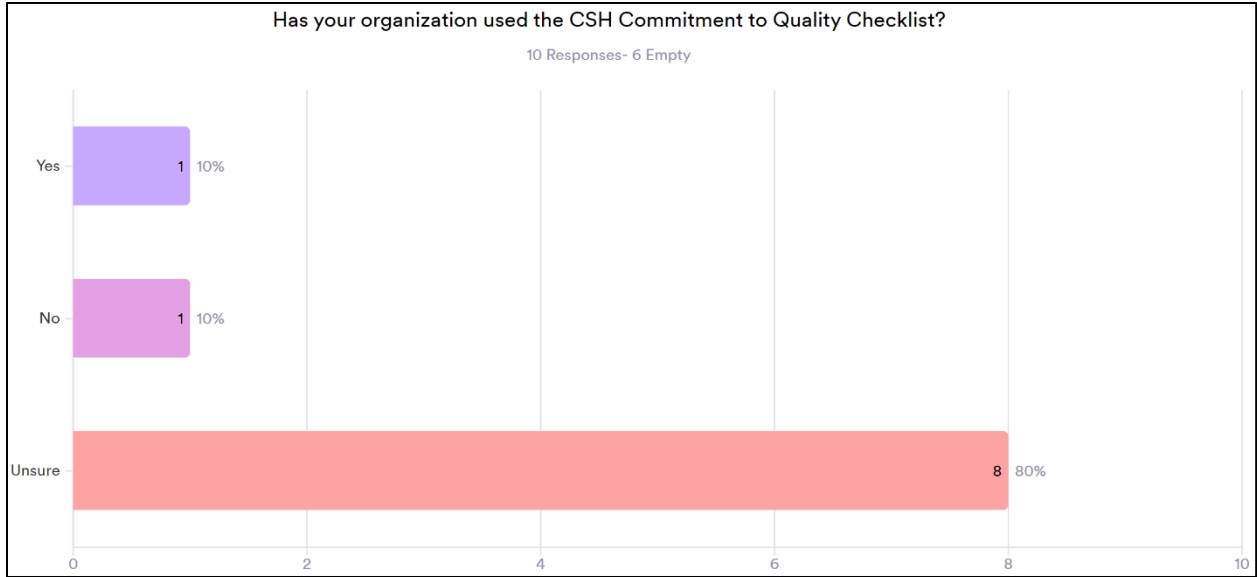
The following question asked whether the respondent's organization has ever used the CSH Quality Self-Assessment Tool and included a link to the tool. No respondents reported that their organization had used the tool, and most respondents (n=8, 80%) were unsure whether their organization had used it.

Has your organization ever used the CSH Quality Self-Assessment Tool?
10 Responses- 6 Empty

Yes	0 0%
No	2 20%
Unsure	8 80%

The following question asked whether the respondent's organization has ever used the SAMHSA PSH Service Fidelity Standards and included a link to the tool. Most respondents (n=8, 80%) were unsure whether their organization had used it, but 4 respondents (40%) reported that their organization had used the tool. Of those 4 respondents, 1 (25%) reported that they found to tool to be somewhat helpful, 2 (50%) reported that they found it to be very helpful, and 1 (25%) was unsure. One respondent shared that they love the fidelity tools and scoring items, writing that they are "very helpful in making sure our organization keeps up to date with standards and quality of care," as well

as that they are helpful in ensuring that their organization's services remain person-centered. They find it useful for measuring how they keep up to date for grants.
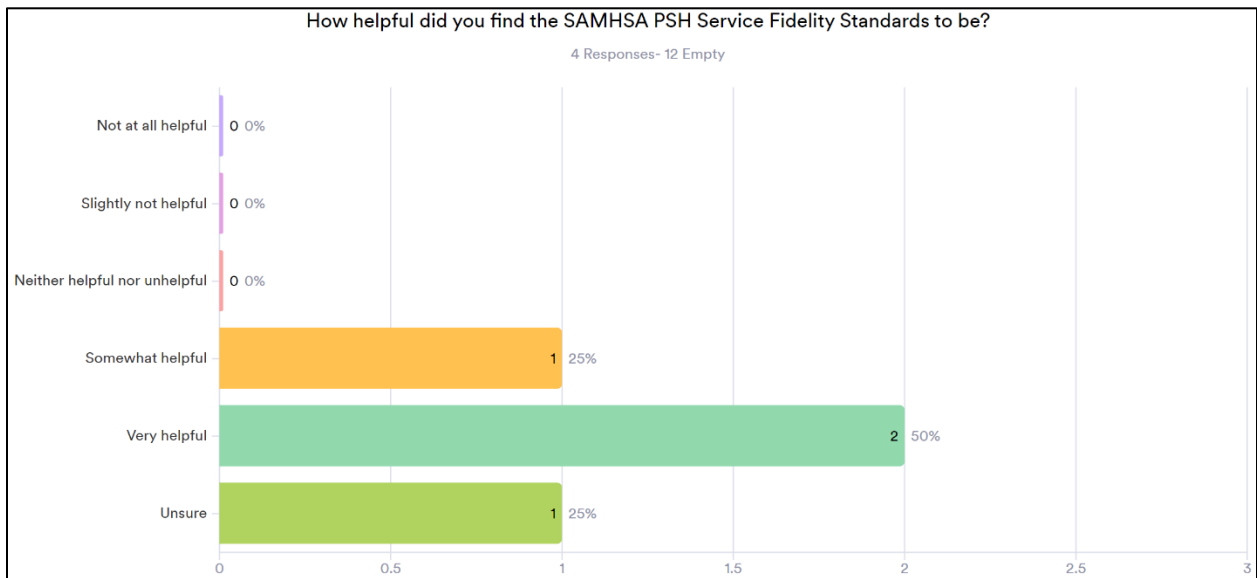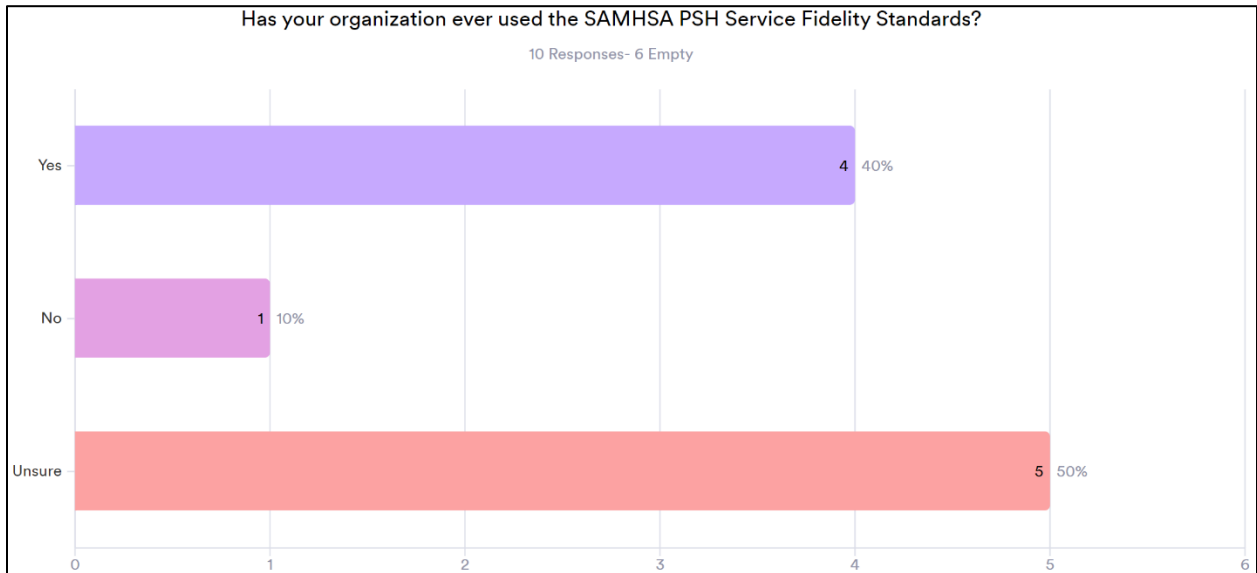
OPERATING REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

The next section asked about operating requirements and standards. The first question asked respondents to rank the importance of operating activities in a supportive housing setting. Responses to this question are included below (total number of respondents=16).

Please rank the importance of each of the following operating activities in a supportive housing setting.					
	Must have	**Best practice**	**Nice to have**	**Helpful in specific situations**	**Not helpful**
Front desk staff	**10 (63%)**	4 (25%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Security staff	**6 (38%)**	**6 (38%)**	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Assistance with moving in	4 (25%)	5 (31%)	**7 (44%)**	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Tenant meetings for community building	**8 (50%)**	5 (31%)	3 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Most respondents (n=10, 63%) believe that front desk staff are a must-have. The next most important operating activity was tenant meetings for community building, followed by security staff. Assistance with moving in was most commonly viewed as nice to have, but not necessary.

The next question asked respondents how difficult it was to fund various operating activities. This question was only shown to the 10 respondents who identified that they were supportive housing service providers or operations staff in the first question. Responses to this question are included below (total number of respondents=10).

How difficult is it to fund each of the following operating activities?						
	Very easy	**Somewhat easy**	**Neither easy nor difficulty**	**Somewhat difficult**	**Very difficult**	**Unsure**
Front desk staff	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	**5 (50%)**	1 (10%)
Security staff	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	**4 (40%)**	2 (20%)
Property manager	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	**5 (50%)**	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Maintenance staff	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	**4 (40%)**	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
Assistance with moving in	0 (0%)	**3 (30%)**	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%
Tenant meetings for community building	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	**4 (40%)**	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The results indicate that front desk staff and security staff are the most difficult operating activities to fund.

The last question in this section asked, "Do you have any additional feedback about operations requirements and standards, including the operations activities listed above as well as tenant screening requirements, tenant intake process, and tenant application process?" Responses mentioned the following topics:

- The tenant screening process should not screen out people with criminal backgrounds, unlawful detainers, or evictions, when possible given safety concerns and funding requirements. Additionally, not having an application fee or requiring a security deposit prior to move in is helpful in making the tenant application process more accessible.
- Supportive housing requires more property management staff, including maintenance and custodians, than affordable housing does.
- Security staff are necessary for some supportive housing sites. This need may be determined by number of calls to police or number of illegal activities in a month.
- Building a strong tenant rights network and having rights and responsibilities visible and known are important.
- Tenants should be offered an opportunity to provide peer support, serve as front desk staff, or in other available roles, as a way to build community and improve chances for tenant and agency success.
- Tenants need a community space outside of their apartment units.
- Management staff should participate in educational opportunities to be able to better serve tenants, including mental health training.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS

The following section asked about staff qualifications and trainings. The first question asked about which trainings staff were currently required to take. Responses to this question are included below (total number of respondents=11).

Which of the following trainings are staff at your agency CURRENTLY required to take?					
	Services staff	Front desk staff	Security staff	Property management	Other operations staff
Client Centric Practices and Engaging Difficult Clients	7	3	1	4	4
Ethics and Boundaries	8	2	1	3	2
Diversity	8	3	1	4	3

Rapid Rehousing	3	0	0	2	1
Trauma Informed Care	9	2	0	3	3
Equity/Race	7	3	1	4	3
Harm Reduction	7	2	0	2	3
Definitions of Homelessness	8	1	0	4	1
Housing First	8	2	0	3	2
Motivational Interviewing	7	0	0	1	1
Self-Care / Minimizing Secondary Trauma	6	1	0	1	1

It is most common for services staff to receive a wide range of trainings, and least common for security staff and front desk staff to receive a wide range of trainings.
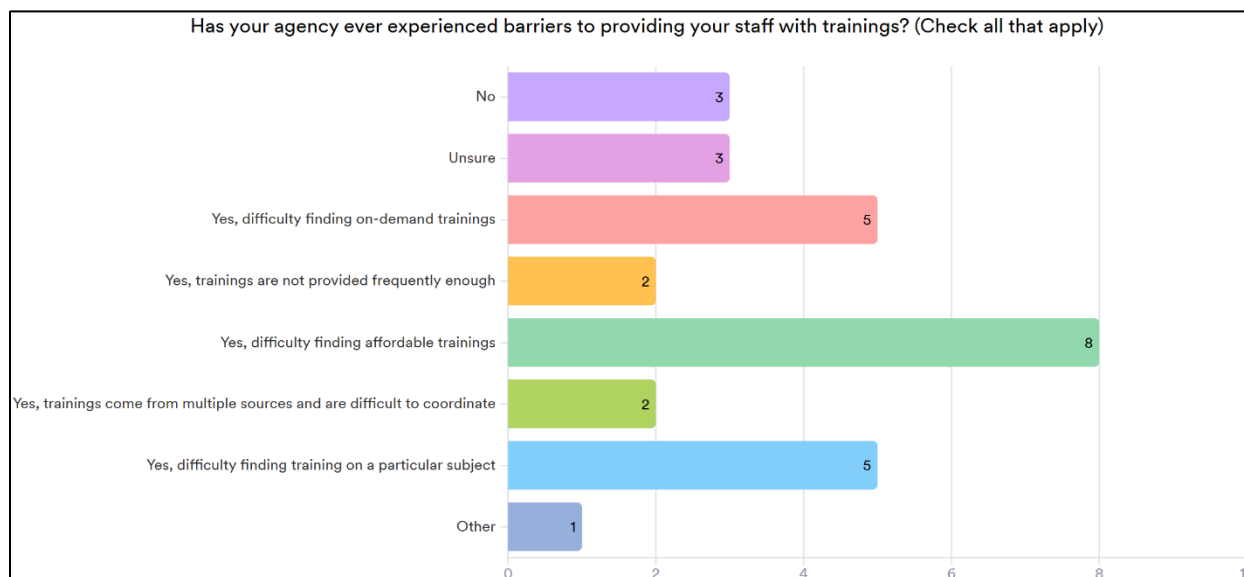
The following question asked which trainings different staff would ideally be required to take. Responses to this question are included below (total number of respondents=11).

Which of the following trainings would staff at your agency IDEALLY be required to take?					
	Services staff	Front desk staff	Security staff	Property management	Other operations staff
Client Centric Practices and Engaging Difficult Clients	8	7	3	6	5
Ethics and Boundaries	7	5	2	7	3
Diversity	7	6	3	5	3
Rapid Rehousing	4	1	0	3	1
Trauma Informed Care	8	4	2	4	2
Equity/Race	8	5	3	6	4
Harm Reduction	8	4	2	3	1

Definitions of Homelessness	6	3	1	5	1
Housing First	5	3	1	4	2
Motivational Interviewing	7	3	2	5	4
Self-Care / Minimizing Secondary Trauma	7	4	2	4	3

The results of this question show that overall, respondents would like to increase the number of trainings that various categories of staff would be required to receive. In particular, respondents would like front desk staff and property management staff to participate in more trainings.

The following question asked about barriers to providing trainings to staff. All 16 respondents answered this question. Most respondents (n=10, 63%) reported that they experienced barriers, the most common of which was difficulty finding affordable trainings (n=8, 50%), followed by difficulty finding on-demand trainings (n=5, 31%) and difficulty finding training on a particular subject (n=5, 31%). One respondent used the "other" option to write in, "It is difficult to train front desk staff because there are not funds to bring them to work beyond their scheduled hours at the desk. Also, many desk staff work multiple jobs and scheduling trainings is difficult." Three respondents (19%) reported that their agency has not experienced barriers to providing trainings, and three (19%) reported that they were unsure.

Has your agency ever experienced barriers to providing your staff with trainings? (Check all that apply)

- No — 3
- Unsure — 3
- Yes, difficulty finding on-demand trainings — 5
- Yes, trainings are not provided frequently enough — 2
- Yes, difficulty finding affordable trainings — 8
- Yes, trainings come from multiple sources and are difficult to coordinate — 2
- Yes, difficulty finding training on a particular subject — 5
- Other — 1

Three respondents provided additional feedback about staff qualifications and training. They shared:

- All staff need to be adequately trained in homelessness and mental health.

- "COVID has complicated things and there is not enough online available for the geographical range that we serve"
- "Finding a quality training that offers information - beyond an overview - that applies to our work has been a challenge. Staff are burnt out on virtual trainings and in person is not an option at this time"

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS

The following section asked about outcomes and performance benchmarks and was only presented to the 10 respondents who identified that they were supportive housing service providers or operations staff in the first question. The first question asked, "How does your organization currently track quality, or what benchmarks for outcomes does your organization use?" Five respondents answered, sharing:

- The SAMHSA PSH Service Fidelity Standards
- Tracking on tenants' housing goals sheets
- Tracking at tenant intake and discharge
- Tenant surveys
- Staff surveys
- Evaluations from funders
- Internal organizational program evaluations
- Length of stay
- Number of unit turns
- Number of police calls
- Amount of bad debt write-offs
- HMIS data quality

No respondents shared additional feedback regarding outcomes and performance benchmarks when asked.

EQUITY

The next section asked questions related to equity. Four respondents answered the question, "What are some best practices for ensuring services are working for diverse populations?" They shared:

- "Ask people and/or recruit a designated 1-2 people from diverse populations be contact person for all."
- "obtaining feedback from residents. Finding out what we are doing well and what needs to be improved. Also getting their input on what we can add to our services."
- "Hiring staff the reflect the population we serve."
- "Having a staff that looks like the diversity of the population served. Offering programming that is culturally specific and driven by the tenants."
- "Also anti racism training regularly for all staff is important."

- "Everyone should take ethics and diversity training as it becomes [available] and as long as it is affordable for the company to be able to provide it."

There were no responses to the following question, "How might certain service standards contribute to OR mitigate racial disparities?" One person responded to the next question, "How do operating activities and standards change for sites providing culturally-specific services?" They shared that information needs to be included in multiple languages, and tenants need to have access to interpreter services. No one responded to the following question, "How might certain operating standards contribute to OR mitigate racial disparities?" Respondents did not share additional feedback on equity.

OTHER

The final section allowed respondents to share any additional feedback regarding supportive housing or the stakeholder feedback sessions. One respondent shared additional feedback regarding supportive housing, writing that supportive housing needs to be a collaborative effort between property managers, housing specialists, and tenants, with the goal of assisting tenants in their permanent housing choices. They also wrote that some supportive housing developers are building housing with the goal of accessing the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program, without considering the needs of supportive housing tenants and instead putting in place difficult application requirements for tenants.