

Supportive Housing for Trust Beneficiaries

What is supportive housing?

- Supportive housing is a safe and affordable place to live with access to community services:
 - case management/care coordination
 - mental health/addiction treatment
 - assisted living/personal care
 - food and basic needs
 - life skills assistance
 - day habilitation
 - crisis intervention
 - employment assistance/job coaching
 - transportation assistance
 - at-home nursing care

How does supportive housing help Trust beneficiaries?¹

- Seniors and people with disabilities are more likely to live stable and productive lives when they have an affordable place to live with access to community support services.
- Supportive housing reduces the likelihood vulnerable Alaskans will become homeless or cycle through expensive emergency services, institutional psychiatric or nursing home care, or have confrontations with police, courts, or prisons.

What are some barriers for Trust beneficiaries accessing supportive housing?

- A 2015 report by the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCSDE), indicated that people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) experience housing barriers that include: 1) lack of supportive housing services for people not eligible for waivers; 2) lack of transition services for youth exiting school; 3) vulnerability of clients and exploitation by landlords; and 4) lack of supported housing and support services for people not on waivers or who live in rural areas.²
- Seniors who experience Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ARD) have few options for supported housing. Costs for in-home and nursing home care are prohibitive for families to afford, and waitlists for nursing home care are long. The state-run Pioneer Homes report long waitlists and 57% of residents needing advanced levels of care.³
- People with mental illness and/or drug addiction can be difficult tenants with poor references. Justice-involved beneficiaries are regularly denied access to housing because of past convictions, mental health or addiction issues.

What are some examples of supportive housing for beneficiaries in Alaska?

- *Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)* is an intervention that serves the most vulnerable homeless individuals who have multiple co-occurring disorders and housing barriers. PSH offers optional supportive services—such as behavioral health treatment, care coordination, etc.
- *Housing First* is a practice used in shelter care and housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness that does not require meeting preconditions—such as sobriety or participation in treatment—before entry.
- *Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)* is an intervention that helps people experiencing homelessness to quickly find and move into a permanent home in their community. RRH serves veterans, families, and individuals, and reduces the instances living in shelters or on the street.

Other kinds of housing supports for vulnerable Alaskans:

- *In-Home Supports* offer beneficiaries access to professional assistance from a person who comes to their home and works with self-help, social skills, activities, etc. *Supported Living* offers daily live-in assistance from a direct care provider.
- *Assisted Living Homes* typically serve people who need medical intervention and/or regular assistance with daily living activities.
- *Group Homes* offer daily support from professionals who assist residents with self-help, treatment, social skills, and activities.

What is needed to provide safe, affordable housing for Trust beneficiaries?

The Trust and partner advisory boards believe that access to adequate housing and community-based support services improves lives, saves money, and increases the likelihood people with disabilities will remain safe, stable, and out of expensive institutional care.

Advocates support housing as a basic need that is critical for addressing the health and well-being of beneficiaries.

In 2017, the senior housing workgroup of the Governor's Housing Summit reported housing as a top priority for Alaskan seniors. The workgroup indicated that "accessible and supportive housing in combination with appropriate and flexible long-term support services and transportation is increasingly recognized as a cost effective health intervention that enhances quality of life, independence, and the ability to age in place."⁴

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has identified that 41% of the people who are homeless in the U.S. also experience a disability.⁵

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a national model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to help individuals and families live

safe, stable lives in their communities. In Alaska, 43% of individuals with frequent prison stays and patterns of homelessness "are considered candidates for permanent supportive housing."⁶

A 2018 report from the University of Alaska indicated that in the six-month period after residents moved into Juneau's *Housing First* facility, there were 230 fewer emergency room visits from complex patients, 495 fewer police contacts from the same population, and 352 fewer nights of supervising a person sleeping off alcohol intoxication.⁷

An Alaska housing barriers report recommended these solutions: 1) incentivize contractors to use the "universal design" of accommodated housing; 2) improve training for housing professionals on Fair Housing Laws and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities; 3) improve access to assistance and housing information; 4) improve and expand services in rural Alaska; 5) address stigma and discrimination in housing practices; 6) address high turnover rate of direct care providers by improving training and increasing wages.⁸

Support policies and funding that promote safe, affordable, supported housing for Trust beneficiaries that includes access to community support services.

¹ Trust beneficiaries include people with mental illness, substance use disorders (SUD), intellectual-developmental disabilities (IDD), Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).

² "Housing Barriers Report 2015," Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, 2015.

³ Alaska Commission on Aging Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2017-18.

⁴ Governor's Housing Summit Update, Senior Housing Workgroup Summary, Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Developing Sustainable Senior Housing, 2017.

⁵ National Alliance To End Homelessness <https://endhomelessness.org/resources>

⁶ Pay For Success Feasibility Study: Initial Findings, Agnew::Beck, April 2018.

⁷ "Juneau Housing First Six-Month Pre/Post Service Usage Indicators of Wellbeing Comparison," Brocius, Heidi PhD, MSW; Erisman, Morgan MSW, MPH, October 30, 2018.

⁸ "Housing Barriers Report 2015," Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, 2015.

For more information, go to: www.alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/jointadvocacy