

# Shared Housing – Alternative Housing Review

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**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# Purpose of SAMHSA Shared Housing Review

To identify shared housing models, components, and emerging best practices that lead to housing stability, recovery, and community integration.

To increase effective housing options for vulnerable populations with serious mental illness (SMI) across the U.S.

To provide an overview of barriers, challenges, and successes in existing housing models for people with SMI experiencing homelessness.

# Why the Increased Need for Housing Options?

- Increase in unassisted very low-income renters with severe rent burdens. In 2015, only 6 in 10 extremely low income renters had access to affordable and available housing unit (Watson et al., 2017)
- Particular need in high cost housing markets, where:
  - More than 50% of the U.S. homeless population lives (State of the Nation's Housing, 2018)
  - Having a housing voucher does not guarantee finding unit to rent, due to low vacancy rate for all rental properties
- Vulnerable populations experience homelessness at a greater rate in high cost housing markets

# Methodology: Literature Review / Environmental Scan

- 1) Literature search: Google Scholar & Google (terms below)
- 2) Key Informant Interviews: 14 Shared / 6 Alternative Housing Sites
- 3) Advisory Council Meeting
- 4) White Paper publication

Population Characteristics	Housing Model Types	
	Shared Housing	Alternative Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Homelessness</li> <li>✓ Chronic Homeless</li> <li>✓ Chronically Homeless</li> <li>✓ Severe Mental Illness</li> <li>✓ Serious Mental Illness</li> <li>✓ Behavioral Health</li> <li>✓ Veterans</li> <li>✓ Elderly</li> <li>✓ Intergenerational</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shared Housing</li> <li>2. Co-Housing</li> <li>3. Collaborative Housing</li> <li>4. House Sharing</li> <li>5. Home Sharing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tiny Homes, Tiny Houses</li> <li>2. Auxiliary Dwelling Units( ADU)</li> <li>3. Modular Dwelling Units</li> <li>4. Granny Flats</li> <li>5. Granny Pods</li> <li>6. Micro Housing, Homes</li> <li>7. Alternative Housing</li> <li>8. Shipping Container Homes, Housing</li> <li>9. Cottage Dwellings</li> <li>10. Innovative Housing</li> </ol>

# Locations: Shared Housing and Tiny House Projects

(KII=Key Informant Interview Sites)



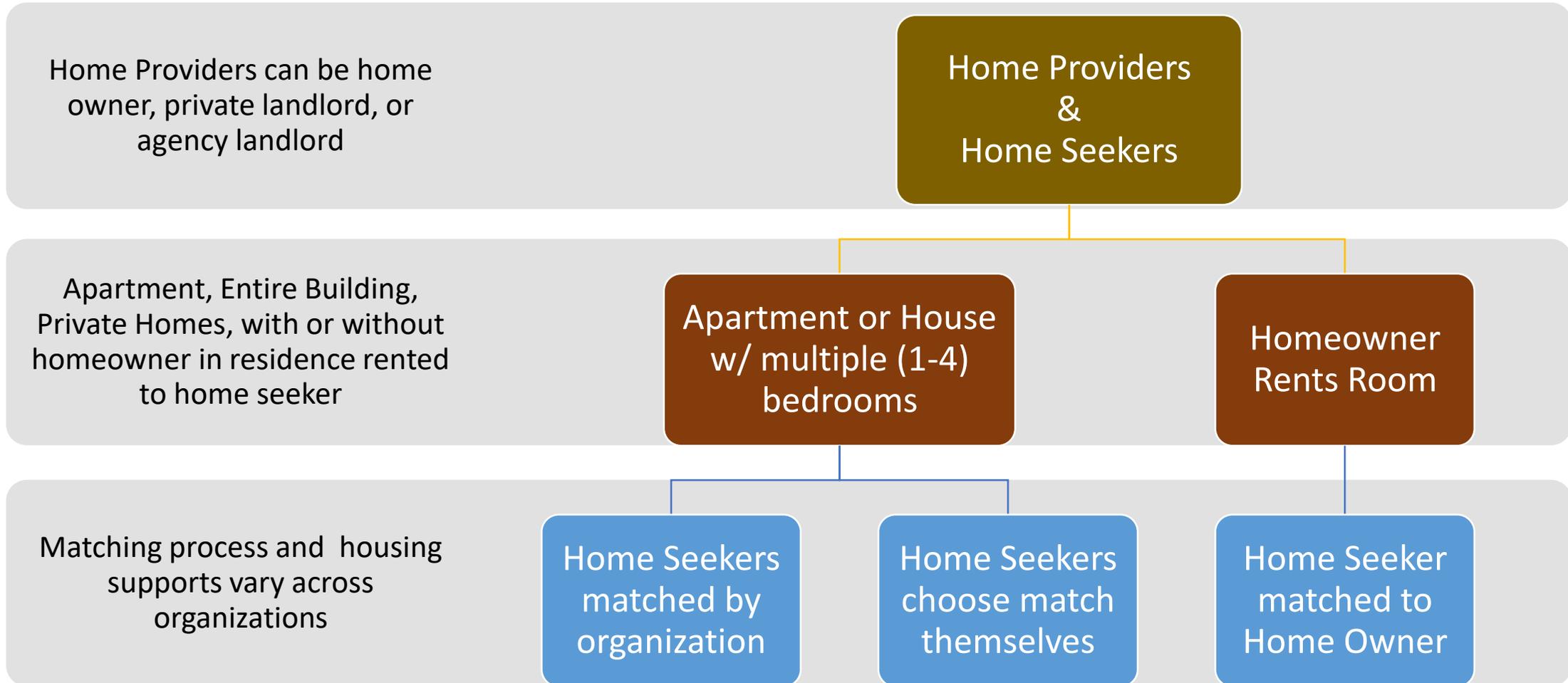
# Shared housing: Definition and Populations Served

**SHARED HOUSING** = Two or more people who live in one **permanent** rental housing unit (NOT ‘doubling up’ or ‘couch surfing’), and share housing costs

## Types of populations served by Shared Housing:

- Diverse sub-populations: single adults, Veterans, single parents, families, youth, college students, live-in care assistants, and nannies
- ▶ No standardized or fidelity model, but emerging promising practices
- ▶ Shared housing can effectively meet needs of people with behavioral health issues who experience homelessness when operated with permanent supportive housing (PSH) best practices

# Shared Housing Models



# Shared Housing: Model Types and Key Players

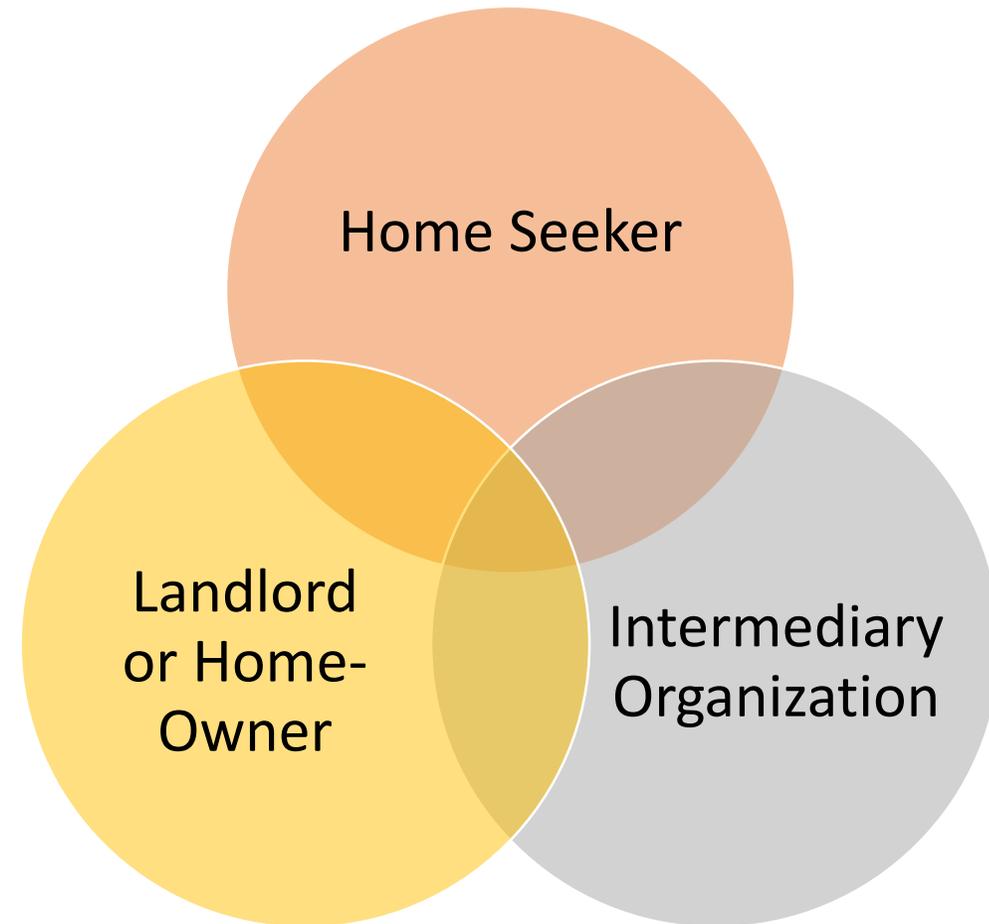
Two primary service types of Shared Housing arrangements:

## 1) Home Sharing

Homeowner rents room in exchange for monetary compensation or assistance with household tasks

## 2) Roommate Matching

Housing provider rents out entire space to group of individuals who choose to live together



# Shared Housing Model: Agency-run Roommate Sharing

## Pacific House (Stamford, CT)

- Agency built and renovated apartment complexes
- 1-4 bedroom units
- Private bedrooms and private bathrooms
- Serving chronically homeless individuals
- Comprehensive case management
- Pay attention to zoning (Stamford max. 4 unrelated adults can live together)
- Funded using state tax stimulus and target foreclosure properties
- 63 people placed in shared housing in last 3 years
- Neighborhood revitalization – opposite of NIMBYism



# Shared Housing Model: Roommates Share Entire Home or Apt.



*SHARE! Collaborative Housing, Los Angeles, CA incentivizes landlords of single-family houses in middle class neighborhoods, 2 persons/bedroom, entire house rented by roommate tenants.*

# SHARE! Collaborative Housing, Los Angeles, CA

- Operating since 2005 with over 150 houses (~50 houses currently, more coming onboard)
- **80% of residents are chronically homeless** with mental health issues and/or substance use and physical health issues
- **Matching Process** – SHARE! Staff suggest vacancies depending on individual’s specific needs and background, then three-way conference call with homeowner
- **Impact:** 400-500 people in housing each year:
  - 26% of residents with SMI get jobs in a year
  - 70% of residents regularly attend self-help groups
- **For clients:** Safe/no fail environment – if someone wants to, or is asked to, leave a house, they are immediately rehoused
  - Barrier-free housing
- **For Landlord:** Same day availability – “Housing Now” approach where people connected with vacancies immediately; only requirements are income and ability to live independently
  - Homeowner incentive – Rent above market rate
- Only 1 homeowner has filed eviction paperwork in 13 years, nobody has ever been evicted!



# Micah Ecumenical Ministries, Fredericksburg, VA

- Move individuals experiencing **chronic homelessness** into shared apartments
- **Matching process** keeps together existing groups or matches individuals based on prioritization process, interests, and known deal breakers
  - Mostly pairs, occasionally groups of three
- **Landlord outreach** - negotiates directly with landlords, brokers with many willing to overlook common barriers to housing
- **Impact:** 44 people in shared permanent supportive housing; 16 people in shared rapid rehousing
  - Less than 10% of individuals in shared housing return to homelessness
  - Matching individuals with different levels of SMI can create informal caregiver/care receiver relationship that Micah has found to work well



# Shared Housing Model: Home Sharing

## Home Share Now, VT



- Matches home providers (homeowners) with an extra bedroom with home seekers looking for housing
- Can be rent and/or service exchange or combo
- Over 12,000 hours of service exchange in FY2017
- 85% of clients are low income
- 115 home sharing matches in FY2017
- Person-driven matching process dependent on transparency and disclosure
- Professional Mediator on staff
- Medicaid waiver funding

# Shared Housing Components and Promising Practices

Projects vary and are customized to meet organizational and key personnel mission, population of focus, regional location, historical context, community culture, funding, Medicaid, disaster experience, and economic environments.

*The following promising practices are based on the literature review and environmental scan.*



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# Finding Homeowners or Home Providers

- Homeowners who want to rent instead of sell
- Homeowners who see benefits of agency support, low vacancy rates
- People in transition, need to rent room for financial stability
- Older adults (65+) in need of assistance to maintain own housing (rent/service exchange)
- Older homeowners in need of additional liquid income

(In LA, houses easily recruited to SHARE!'s program, as demand for rentable single-family houses is low compared to apartments)

## *Promising Practice - Home Provider Outreach Ideas:*

- ❖ Incentives to new Home Providers (e.g. Walmart Gift Card); can be raffled
- ❖ Outreach to new Home Providers through referrals (home providers, Council on Aging, Mental Health Agencies, Vocational Rehabilitation, local media)
- ❖ Advantage of intermediary organization and resulting low vacancy
- ❖ Meet with all home providers as a group once a year (see themselves as helping community with homeless population)

# Finding Homeowners or Home Providers

## Additional strategies for finding home providers and landlords:

- ✓ Search property management databases
- ✓ Call real estate and property management firms to set up appointments to 'sell' shared housing
- ✓ Respond to advertisements for available housing in local media
- ✓ Direct mailer campaigns
- ✓ Advertising rents above fair market rates to incentivize willingness of landlords to have separate leases with each tenant
- ✓ Tax breaks for landlords and homeowners who participate in shared housing programs

# Promising Practice: Matching Home seekers / Roommates

Match process includes:

- Questionnaire: personality traits, preferences, deal breakers (e.g. kitchen/bathroom habits)
- In-person interviews & home visits
- Reference/background checks (personal, employment, criminal, housing references)
- Facilitated introductions

## *Promising Practices - Tools for Matching:*

- ❖ Property management software in LA, makes visible current vacancies
- ❖ 3-way conferencing with homeowner who has a vacancy with person experiencing homelessness and intermediary organization on 1st phone call
- ❖ Roommate Matching algorithm tools
- ❖ Adoption by homeless service providers of extensive roommate screening tools utilized by home sharing agencies
- ❖ Community Information Exchange (CIE) displays roommate matches along Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data within 24 hours

# Promising Practice: Matching Principles

## Matching Principles:

- **Person-centered process:** Housing Navigator gets to know home seeker's preferences and areas where can compromise
- **Client choice:** Ability to choose to enter into or leave shared housing arrangement
- **Maintain existing relationships** - between clients who then become roommates, building on existing peer networks when possible
- **Take Time:** Don't rush to match or match just based on vacancies, comprehensive screening process takes time
- **Short trial period:** 1 to 4 weeks; willing to rematch if unresolvable issues arise

# Promising Practice: Formalized Tenancy Agreements

All housing services have contracts to protect client rights and housing:

**Lease Agreement**: each individual resident needs to have separate lease with landlord (avoids financial pitfalls of one roommate leaving early) that includes all utilities

**Roommate Agreement**: formalized between roommates to clearly stipulate roles and responsibilities, identify processes and provide accountability for conflict mediation

**MOU between intermediary organization and landlord**: outlining processes for moving residents, maximum occupancy, rent inclusions (furniture, utilities, etc.), conflict mediation processes, 24/7 emergency support

**Participation Agreement between intermediary organization and home seeker**: including client contact information, permission for release of information and background checks, employment/income verification, references, tenant roles and responsibilities, liability release

# Promising Practice: Formalized Roommate Agreements

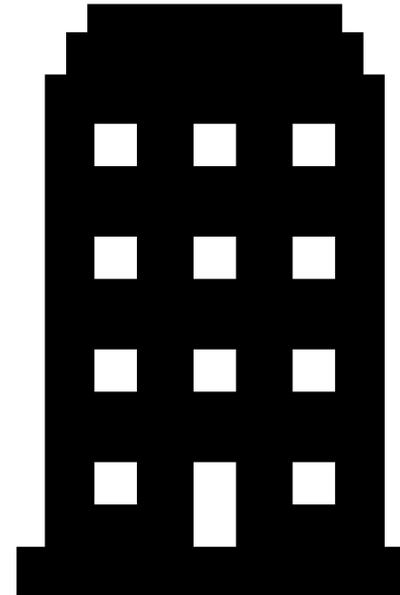
**Roommate Agreement:** formalized between roommates to clearly stipulate roles and responsibilities, identify processes and provide accountability for conflict mediation

## Roommate Agreements should include the following components (DeJong & Freed, 2017):

- Emergency contact numbers for the intermediary organization
- Conflict mediation processes
- Responsibility for damages
- Responsibility for household supplies (cleaning products, garbage bags, light bulbs, dish/laundry detergents, etc.)
- Kitchen use time limitations
- Food storage space and use
- Definition of private and common spaces and use limitations
- Definition of shared and private items (pots and pans, dishes, etc.) and use limitations
- Bathroom use and limitations
- Privacy and guest rules, including overnight guests
- House rules: smoking, alcohol, pets, noise and quiet times
- Roles and responsibilities for chores, cleaning, dishes, garbage
- Specifics (frequency, duration) of service exchange if applicable
- Any other deal breakers of either party

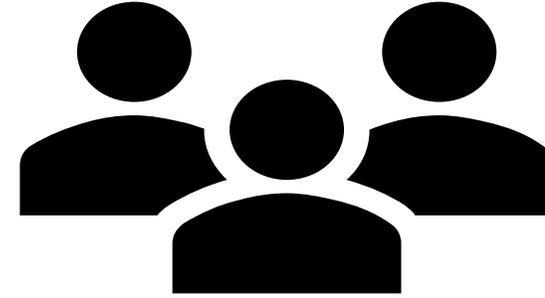
# Promising Practice: Training for Homeowner Hosts

- Trauma-informed care
- PTSD
- Boundaries
- Nonviolent communication
- Conflict resolution
- Recovery Housing Model
- Housing stabilization networks
- Mental health and community referral network
- Housing First



# Promising Practice: Intermediary Staff Qualities/Trainings

- Housing Navigator
- Housing Liaison
- Housing Stabilization Staff
- Referral Network Connections:
  - Conflict resolution mediator
  - Behavioral Health services
  - Self-help groups



## Training for staff and volunteers should include: (DeJong & Freed, 2017)

- Housing First
- Trauma-informed care
- Harm reduction
- PTSD
- Boundaries
- Nonviolent communication
- De-escalation and crisis intervention
- Identification of domestic violence / sex trafficking
- Conflict resolution
- Recovery Housing Model
- Mental health and community services referral network
- Cultural competence & working with diverse populations
- Budgeting, rental assistance programs and timelines
- Managing value and expectation of all parties

# Promising Practice: Housing Stabilization Strategies

- Person-centered plan for success
- **Case Management and Peer Supports**
- **Housing stabilizer staff** who check in regularly
- **Individualized Goals:** e.g. SHARE! Plan for Success, person-centered path:
  - Person matched to house is visited by staff who focus on developing a five-year plan for success, to ensure newly housed can visualize new reality! Also connect person to self-help group/s of their choice
- **Self-help groups referral network** – to increase tenancy skills, tenancy longevity, self-agency
  - SHARE! database tracks 12,000 self-help groups across LA County and offers these options to all tenants to include in their own plan.

# Promising Practice: Staff with lived experience

**Peer Bridger**: a person with lived experience and sustained recovery from mental health, trauma, homelessness and/or substance abuse. Works with tenants, found to improve housing retention.

Peer support helps move people with trauma out of the "fight or flight" mentality, increasing tolerance for conflict in roommate relationships.

# Promising Practice: Conflict resolution strategies

1. Identify and clearly define the problem
2. Brainstorm solutions
3. Evaluate solutions
4. Choose the best mutually acceptable 'win-win' solution
5. Implement the solution
6. Choose a follow-up date to evaluate

- Mediate interpersonal conflicts; know difference when to move somebody and when to explore underlying conflict ("not paying rent until you move me")
- People living in house make own rules. e.g., House determines whether alcohol allowed. If a tenant breaks a rule, they can be moved to a house that does allow alcohol (when enough units)
- Supply TV and mini-fridge in every bedroom to reduce potential friction

# Promising Practice: Conflict resolution case examples

- VT program has **Professional Mediator on staff**, uses many skills and activities to neutralize, facilitate compromise or mutually agreed upon resolution.
- MICAH, VA, finds mediation the key to conflict resolution. When conflicts arise, use **Roommate Agreement Tool to mediate next step.**
- SHARE! In LA requires in **MOU that landlord call if a person not working out, to give chance to mediate.** When necessary, SHARE! moves person immediately and rent is pro-rated to ensure person can move in another place on same day.

# Evidence: Shared Housing for Chronically Homeless

Fredericksburg Virginia Project: MICAH is a wrap-around organization serving people experiencing street homelessness and chronic homelessness.

- Moved people out of campsites to shared apartments; being roommates allows persons on disability to split and cover rent
- In 2016 Micah housed 81 high barrier single adults, many experiencing chronic homelessness; less than 10% returned to homelessness

*“Requires high level commitment from landlord, clients and housing stabilization service.”*

SHARE! LA: See shared bedroom a best practice for people who are chronically homeless, to avoid isolation.

- In 2017, housed 472 people in about 50 houses across LA County. 26% of residents with SMI employed within one year
- In 2015, shared housing cost much less than one PSH unit

# Funding: Shared Housing

- On average, people pay \$400 - \$500/month for rent
- Some organizations master-lease units: buy a building, renovate using state tax credits; assures housing quality and transfers vacancy risk to agency
- Medicaid waiver funding can be used in some states
- SSI can pay rental fees, use interim subsidies during SSI application
- Veteran benefits can be used as long as on lease and rent is proportional to space leased
- But greater research still needed on policy impact of shared housing on federal and state benefits (SSI, SSDI, Section 8, SNAP)

# HUD funding of Shared Housing

HUD funded tenant subleases for Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing

HUD guidelines for shared housing for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC) programs:

- Shared housing is allowable when:
  - ✓ Resident is homeless at entry and meets income eligibility
  - ✓ Each tenant has his/her own separate (12 month) lease
  - ✓ Tenants have **choice** regarding whom they live with
  - ✓ Rental unit meets habitability standards
  - ✓ Unit meets fair market rent and rent reasonableness standards

# Shared Housing Challenges

Individual Level	System Level
Reduced privacy	Zoning restrictions on number of unrelated adults living together
Difficult to find willing landlords (additional burden of individual leases, potential for overcharging/overcrowding)	Concern about safety of home owners living with individuals with SMI
Potentially stressful interpersonal conflicts or conflict avoidance	Community concern about formerly homeless individuals living in neighborhood (NIMBYism)
Financial issues (demand for free or reduced rent arrangements greater than supply, unstable income due to turnover)	Perceived as temporary option
Negative influences for individuals in recovery	Perception that people with SMI cannot live independently

# Shared Housing Benefits

Community Benefits	Home seeker Benefits	Home owner Benefits
Adds new affordable housing without Section 8 vouchers	Lower rent payments for single adults	Older adults and home renters gain financial security by renting a room or renting a house
Reduces homelessness	Less stress about money	Reduced vacancies due to continual presence of multiple tenants
Housing options made available in very high rent areas	Neighbors do not identify residents as formerly homeless or with SMI	Matched home providers report feeling safer and less isolated
Existing housing stock is not vacant; raises home values	Peer support, connection and community opportunities	In college towns, landlords used to shared rentals
Maximize use of HUD housing assistance funds	Opportunity to learn conflict resolution skills	Greater community engagement

# From early-adopters to system-level scale



- How to move from projects run by early adopters to system-wide approaches?
- What information about Shared Housing can be made systematically available to public, providers, clients, etc..
- What outcomes could be suggested to evaluate shared housing projects?  
Program/System - level outcomes?



# SAMHSA Resources

- SAMHSA's Homeless and Housing Resource Network (HHRN) Technical Assistance Contract, see SAMHSA website
- SAMHSA's SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Technical Assistance Center at <https://soarworks.prainc.com/>
- SAMHSA Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence-Based Practices (EBP KIT) at <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4510>
- SAMHSA Recovery to Practice Information for Peer Specialists Serving People with Mental Health Conditions Experiencing Homelessness, online learning with 6 modules at <https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery-to-practice>

# SAMHSA Resources (continued)

- SAMHSA Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Strategy Web page on Peers at <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>
- SAMHSA Grants by State at <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants-awards-by-state>



# Thank you.

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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# Alternative Housing Components and Best Practices

Projects vary - customized to organizational and key personnel mission, population of focus, regional location, historical context, community culture, funding, Medicaid, disaster experience and economic environments.



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# Alternative Housing Models

1. Tiny Homes / Tiny House Villages
2. Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) (e.g. The Block Project)
3. Modular Homes (e.g. shipping container complexes)
4. 3-D printing of Tiny Houses



Photo: Hope of the Valley Help Center Van Nuys, CA



Photo: A Tiny Home for Good, Syracuse, NY

## Tiny homes the answer for single men on one First Nation

To meet the needs of unattached men facing homelessness, B.C.'s Nuxalk First Nation will offer small houses at affordable rental rates.



Photo: Canadian Press, March 31, 2018

# Alternative housing: Definition

## *Alternative housing:*

- Variety of innovative, locally designed and implemented, strategies to house populations experiencing chronic homelessness
- Challenging to identify emerging promising practices due to tremendous variability, lack of standardization

# Emerging Alternative Housing: Tiny House Villages

Provide residents dignity of own private home along with benefits of engagement and peer interaction in shared community space

Can be Permanent Supportive Housing if include Case Management, client choice, strong referral network of services

## Transitional Micro House

- temporary structure
  - no electricity, heating or plumbing
  - can be found in encampments

## Permanent Tiny House

- 128-400+ sq. ft. permanent structure
- electricity, heating, plumbing; private kitchen(ette); full bathroom w/ shower

## Tiny House Village

- community of tiny houses
- can have common areas: larger kitchen, gathering room, laundry, gardens

# Quixote Village, Thurston County, WA

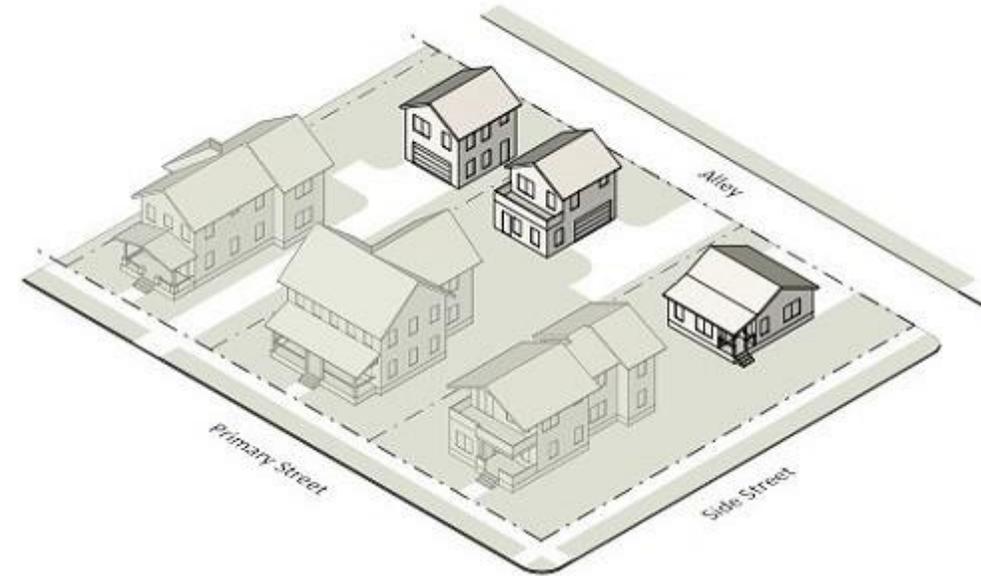
- 30 tiny homes with 144 sq. ft. living area
- Permanent supportive housing tiny home community (full time case manager, recovery housing model, peer support)
- Funded through state capital budget, federal CDBG, county, donations
- Community building with kitchen, showers, laundry facilities, TV/meeting room, staff offices
- Very high demand – currently has waiting list of 25 people



*Quixote Village, built on former homeless encampment site, houses 61 people in Thurston County, WA; communal living with peer mentorship and support. Now building second Tiny Village.*

# Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

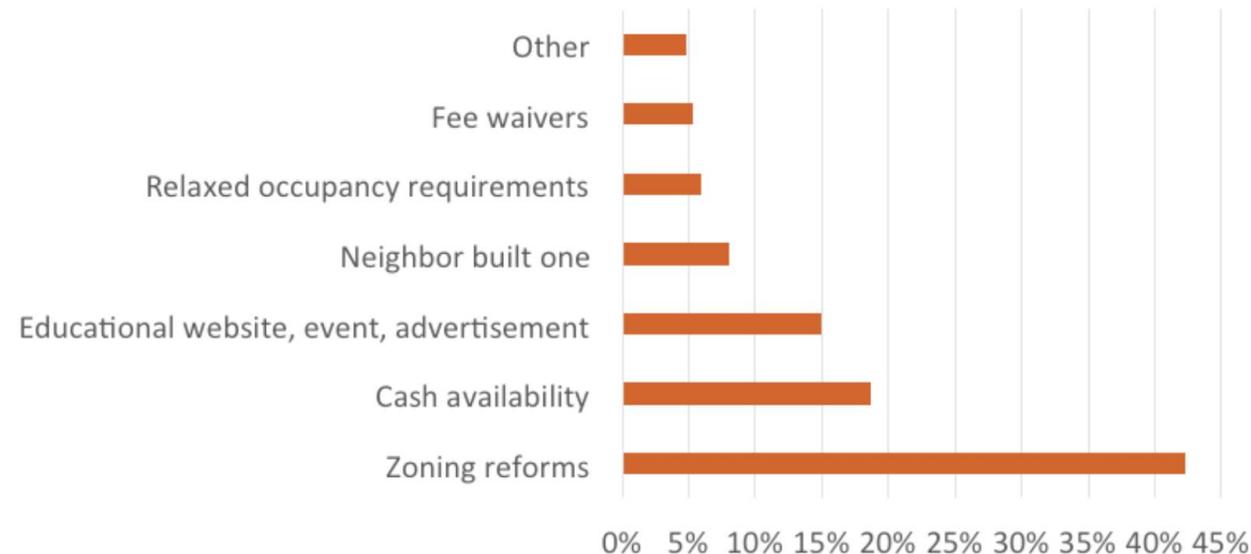
- ‘Granny flats’ or tiny houses that are built in existing backyards of single family homes
- Add to affordable housing stock in high cost housing markets (some cities offering amnesty programs for previously banned ADUs and/or financial incentives for homeowners to build an ADU)
- Promote ‘aging in place’ by providing source of income to primary homeowner
- Face similar zoning challenges to other forms of shared housing, but many cities have recently enacted reforms (Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, Austin, Salt Lake City)



*An example of three ADUs from a Raleigh, N.C., city ordinance.*

# Accessory Dwelling Units Challenges

- **Zoning:** building and lot regulations, permitting fees, parking requirements
- **Financial:** difficulty obtaining capital due to hesitancy to give loans
- **Social:** need for increased homeowner awareness and education



## *Most important factors leading to the decision to build an ADU*

*Source: Jumpstarting the Market for Accessory Dwelling Units: Lessons Learned From Portland, Seattle And Vancouver. Karen Chapple, Jake Wegmann, Farzad Mashhood, and Rebecca Coleman. 2017.*

# Emerging Alternative Housing Models



*San Francisco-based nonprofit New Story is partnering with construction company ICON, of Austin, Texas, to build 100 single-family houses in El Salvador next year. NBCNews.com 3/28/18*



*The Block Project in Seattle committed to placing an off-grid "Block" Home in at least one backyard single-family lot on every residentially zoned block in Seattle.*



*Potters Lane in Midway, CA, a permanent housing complex in USA made from modified shipping containers. 480 sq ft. for chronically homeless veterans.*

# Emerging Alternative Housing: Modular Tiny House



*Healthy Housing Foundation Los Angeles demonstration of tiny modular home "Kasita" is the first one ever deployed in California.*



*Invented by Harvard researcher Jeff Wilson, Kasita is a modular, smart micro home that can be stacked and grouped to house many individuals in a community in a small footprint in high cost housing markets. Costing \$89,000 and measuring 352 square feet, the units can be built in under 3 weeks. They are currently also used in market rate developments in Austin and Denver.*

