

Supportive Housing Evidence Briefs

Summary of Outcomes

Supportive housing is a model of affordable housing that is designed specifically for people who need services to recover and thrive in their community. It serves people who are facing complex physical and behavioral health challenges while also experiencing homelessness, institutionalization, and/or housing instability. People in supportive housing pay 30% of their income toward rent and are accountable to a lease with all of the rights and responsibilities of tenancy.

The services people receive in supportive housing are intensive and delivered using a low staff to client ratio. Services are personalized but typically address mental health and addiction recovery, employment/income, and physical health care.



Supportive Housing is...

Quality affordable housing targeted to people with the greatest needs

Support services that help people recover and stabilize in housing

Tailored supports like healthcare, employment, mental health and substance use

A proven model to rebuild lives and reduce public costs

In dozens of studies across the country over the last 20 years, supportive housing has proven to be an effective intervention that improves housing stability, reduces the use of expensive crisis care, and improves outcomes even for individuals with complex needs.

This brief highlights key evidence for communities to consider as they work to meet the housing and support needs of all individuals and families.

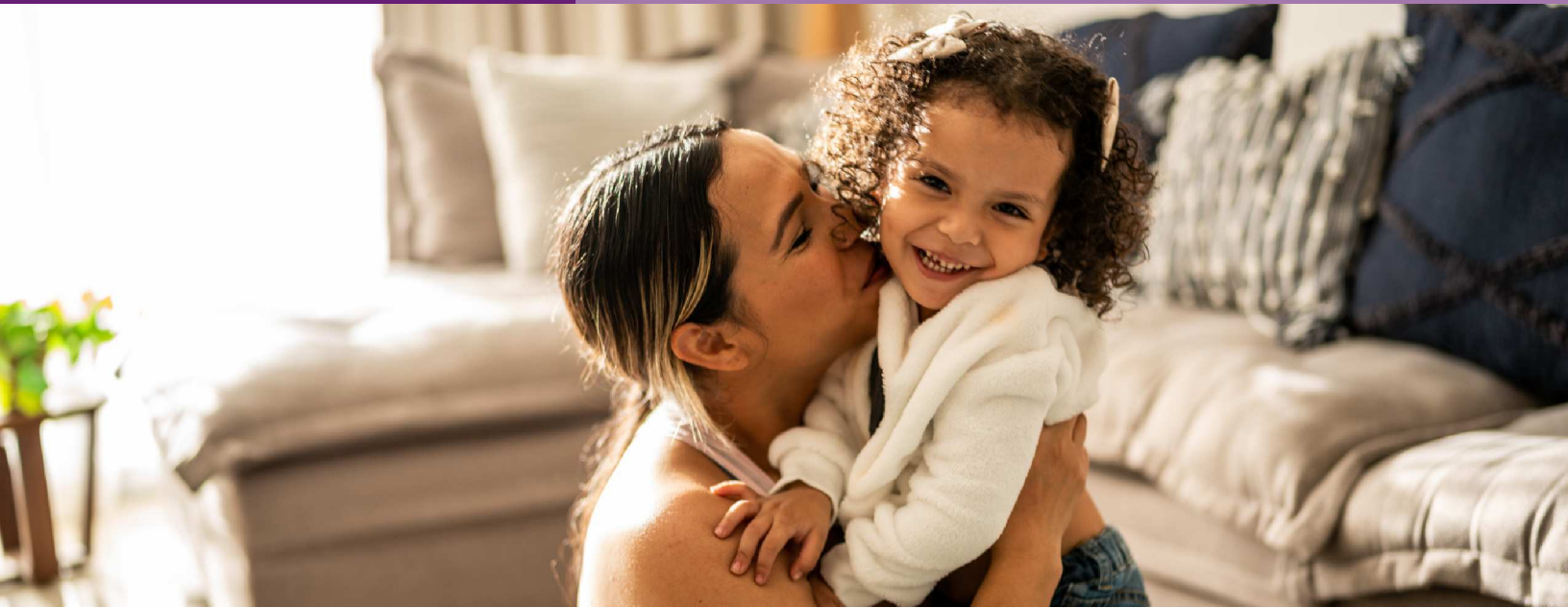
People in supportive housing stay housed and nearly eliminate their use of shelter.

- ✓ In Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, 80% of participants in supportive housing stayed housed for at least a year and **reduced their use of shelter by 93%**.
- ✓ In New York City, **over 91% of supportive housing tenants** with significant histories of homelessness **were still housed after one year**. Compared to a group of people who did not receive supportive housing, those who did had a 40% reduction in days incarcerated. And these results last, a **10 year follow up study found** that the **most common pattern** among those with supportive housing was **no further jail or shelter stays**.
- ✓ In Santa Clara County, **86% of participants connected with permanent supportive housing remained housed** compared to only a third of the comparison group. Many among this group had chronic physical and mental health conditions as well as substance use disorders.

Supportive housing results in positive shifts in health use, from crisis to preventive care.

- ✓ In Bozeman, Montana, a supportive housing initiative saw a **42.2% decrease in emergency department visits** and a **47.2% increase in behavioral health appointments**. 75% of tenants reported improved mental and physical health.
- ✓ In Santa Clara County, California, people in supportive housing **reduced their use of psychiatric emergency services** and increased their use of outpatient mental health relative to a group of people who did not receive supportive housing.
- ✓ In Denver, Colorado, after two years participants in a supportive housing initiative had **six fewer emergency department visits** and more office-based visits and prescription medications than a comparison group.





Supportive housing reduces justice system interactions and is fiscally responsible.

- ✓ The Community Transition Program (CTP), funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, provides housing and support to people exiting Ohio's prison system who face substance use, behavioral health, and housing challenges. In the most recent year of data, **only 1.1% exited to prison.**
- ✓ In Los Angeles, 82% of supportive housing tenants stayed housed for at least a year and relative to a comparison group saw a **24 day reduction in jail days.**
- ✓ It costs \$58,000/year to incarcerate someone in the Palm Beach County, Florida jail AND more than half re-enter the jail within 3 years. Not only does **supportive housing reduce jail bookings by more than 90%, it does so for a third of the cost of incarceration.**

Supportive housing improves child welfare outcomes.

- ✓ In a multi-site demonstration of supportive housing for families with child welfare involvement, **20% more children were reunited with their families** than in the comparison group and these reunifications happened faster.
- ✓ A follow up study to this multi-site demonstration found that **children whose families received supportive housing were more likely to still be at home after 5 years**, spending on average 108 more days at home.
- ✓ In Chicago, families with child welfare involvement who received rental subsidies and supportive services were **less likely to have a child in out of home placement** than families who only received supportive services after 3 years.

Supportive housing is a cost-effective strategy to reduce homelessness.

- ✓ An analysis based on a review of 20 evaluations found that every dollar invested in supportive housing for disabled people experiencing long-term homelessness saves taxpayers 1.44 dollars.
- ✓ A rigorous five-year analysis of a supportive housing initiative in Denver found that approximately half the total annual per person cost of a Denver supportive housing program was offset by reductions in the per person costs of other services because of avoided outcomes. **Participants had \$6,876 less in annual per person costs** associated with avoided outcomes compared with the control group, with the biggest reductions in jail and ambulance costs.
- ✓ A supportive housing initiative in Pima County, Arizona found that the **costs of implementing supportive housing were offset by reductions in justice and health systems**. These findings suggested that the intervention may be cost neutral while improving outcomes for tenants.
- ✓ In a Los Angeles study of hospital patients with histories of homelessness, **every dollar spent** on housing and supports **reduced costs** for the individuals who were housed "**by \$2 in the first year and \$6 in subsequent years.**"

Supportive housing is a proven intervention for individuals, families and youth, including those with disabilities and long histories of homelessness. The evidence clearly shows that it **promotes housing stability, reduces the use of crisis services and institutions, and improves health and well-being**. It is a cost-effective approach for communities, that **helps to promote public safety and thriving neighborhoods**.



Works Cited

1. Thomas, M. L., Hutchison, J., Lane, J., Carman, J., Schulkind, L., Clark, A., Cole, A., Dulin, M., Kulkarni, S., Hill, D., Sardana, B., Venkitasubramanian, K., Troyer, J., Tsemberis, S., Hammock, C. C., Clasen-Kelly, L., LaCaria, C., Ludden, T., Priester, M. A., Williams, T. (2020). Housing First Charlotte-Mecklenburg Research & Evaluation Project: Final outcomes report. UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. <https://ui.charlotte.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1003/2024/02/HFCM-Final-Outcomes-Report-2020-Final.pdf>
2. Aidala, A. A., McAllister, W., Yomogida, M., & Shubert, V. (2013). Frequent Users Service Enhancement (FUSE) initiative: Evaluation report. Corporation for Supportive Housing. <https://shnny.org/uploads/CSH-FUSE-Evaluation.pdf>
3. Raven, M. C., Niedzwiecki, M. J., & Kushel, M. (2020). A randomized trial of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons with high use of publicly funded services. *Health Services Research*, 55(S2), 797–806. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.13553>
4. Hanson, D., & Gillespie, S. (2024). 'Housing First' increased psychiatric care office visits and prescriptions while reducing emergency visits. *Health Affairs*, 43(6), 872–880. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2023.01041>
5. Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (2025). Community Transition Program (CTP): Statewide Housing Benefit Year End Report, SFY2025. <https://mha.ohio.gov/community-partners/criminal-justice/re-entry-programs/community-transition-program-sitearea/community-transition-program>
6. Hunter, S. B., Scherling, A., Cefalu, M., & McBain, R. K. (2022). Just in Reach Pay for Success: Impact evaluation and cost analysis of a permanent supportive housing program. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1758-1.html
7. Henrichson, C., & Delaney, R. (2015). The price of jails: Measuring the taxpayer cost of local incarceration. Vera Institute of Justice. <https://www.vera.org/publications/the-price-of-jails-measuring-the-taxpayer-cost-of-local-incarceration>
8. Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission. (n.d.). Research and planning brief: Recidivism. [https://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice/PDF/Research%20and%20Planning/Reports/Research%20and%20Planning%20Brief%20%20Recidivism%20\(new\).pdf](https://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice/PDF/Research%20and%20Planning/Reports/Research%20and%20Planning%20Brief%20%20Recidivism%20(new).pdf)
9. Atkin-Plunk, C. A., & Fallik, S. W. (2022). Evaluation of the Palm Beach County Frequent Users System Engagement (PalmFUSE) Program. Florida Atlantic University, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. <https://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice/PDF/2024/PalmFuse-Report.pdf>

Works Cited

11. Pergamit, M., Cunningham, M., Hanson, D., & Stanczyk, A. (2019). Does supportive housing keep families together? Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/100289/does_supportive_housing_keep_families_together_1.pdf
12. Chambers, J., Packard Tucker, L., & Pergamit, M. (2023). Keeping children at home with supportive housing: Long-term child welfare outcomes for families who received supportive housing. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/keeping-children-home-supportive-housing>
13. Fowler, P. J., Brown, D. S., Schoeny, M., & Chung, S. (2018). Homelessness in the child welfare system: A randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of housing subsidies on foster care placements and costs. *Child abuse & neglect*, 83, 52–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.07.014>
14. Gillespie, S., Hanson, D., Leopold, J., & Oneto, A. D. (2021). Costs and offsets of providing supportive housing to break the homelessness-jail cycle: Findings from the Denver Supportive Housing Social Impact Bond Initiative. Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104499/costs-and-offsets-of-providing-supportive-housing-to-break-the-homelessness-jail-cycle_0.pdf
15. McBain, R. K., Scherling, A., Briscoombe, B., & Hunter, S. B. (2021). Pima County Housing First Initiative: Final evaluation report, Fall 2021. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA236-1.html
16. Flaming, D., Lee, S., Burns, P., & Sumner, G. (2013). Getting home: Outcomes from housing high cost homeless hospital patients. Economic Roundtable. https://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Getting_Home_2013.pdf