

Transitional Housing: **Models & Rent Structures**

Transitional Housing is often a critical service for survivors of violence, allowing them to escape an abusive partner safely. There are a variety of housing models and rent structures being used by transitional housing programs across the country. This document highlights the three most common transitional housing models being used by the Office on Violence Against Women's (OVW) Transitional Housing Grant program grantees. Additionally, there are a variety of rent structures that are being used by these programs which are noted here as well. There is no one correct way to structure your transitional housing model or rent process. These things will vary based on your programs mission, the way in which you are funded, and the population of survivors you are serving. Below is a list of the various housing models that exist and some of the pros and cons.

Transitional Housing Models

Scattered Site

- Survivors live in an apartment in the community in a full market rent unit.
- Survivor holds lease in their own name.
 - On rare occasions the program holds the lease and subleases to survivor.
- Program is not in the role of the landlord (Unless subleasing to survivor).
- Increasingly the most common model. This model allows for the survivor to possibly remain in the unit once the financial assistance has ended therefore eliminating the need to relocate again.

Clustered Site

- Program owns building with units or rents a group of apartments in a common location.
- Program is landlord and service provider.
- Survivor lives in program building or one of the program's rented units for a specific period of time while they find more permanent housing.

Communal Living

- Similar to shelter design. May have separate/private bedrooms but share common space such as living room, dining room, kitchen, etc.
- Least common of the 3 models used.



**Transitional Housing is not an extended shelter stay.* Federal guidelines for programs receiving grants from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) state that transitional housing is not intended to be an extended shelter stay and must be offered for a minimum of 6 months. Regardless of the model used, transitional housing programs should be providing a longer-term housing option for survivors while helping them to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

Transitional Housing Rent Structures

Subsidized

- Survivor enters into lease. Program provides a portion of rent, as rental assistance, paid directly to the landlord.

Rent and Sublet

- Lease is in program's name and program is responsible for payment of the rent. Program creates sub-lease or rental agreement for survivor and survivor pays a portion of the total cost of rent to the program.

Own

- Program owned and operated. Program creates sub-lease or rental agreement for survivor and survivor pays a portion of the total cost of rent to the program.
 - *Note – If you are implementing your transitional housing program with OVW Transitional Housing grant funds, rent collected from survivors must not be used as program income. Any rent collected from survivors in this structure must be put back into the transitional housing program and be used to provide assistance to survivors.*

As a best practice, it is recommended that in all rent structures mentioned that survivors never be required to pay more than 30% of their income in rent.



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Pros and Cons to Housing Models and Rent Structures

Subsidize

- Pros:
 - Program is not responsible for unit. Allows the program to instead focus on being a service provider and ally.
 - Survivor may be able to remain in the unit once the financial assistance has ended therefore eliminating the need to relocate again.
- Cons:
 - Not all survivors are eligible for a lease. (For example; undocumented survivors, survivors with low to no income and/or survivors with poor or no credit).
 - Not ideal for survivors who prefer a more supportive transitional environment since there is typically no staff on hand in a scattered site model.

Rent and Sublet

- Pros:
 - Program can increase access for survivors otherwise not eligible for a lease by holding the lease in the programs name.
- Cons:
 - Program is responsible for unit and must act as landlord as well as service provider. *It is a recommended best practice that programs using this model designate separate staff to perform duties related to managing the property and collection of rent (Landlord role) and staff to provide support and advocacy services. By doing this, programs maximize the ability for staff to provide trauma informed services.

Own

- Pros:
 - Program is in control of all aspects of housing and can create a housing program with minimal barriers for survivors.
- Cons:
 - Program is responsible for all maintenance, upkeep, and repairs. Program acts as landlord as well as service provider.