

WHO WE ARE

Episcopal Community Services (ECS) has provided essential services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in San Francisco since 1983, utilizing a holistic approach that addresses the multiple causes leading to homelessness

OUR MISSION

ECS helps homeless and very low-income people every day and every night obtain the housing, jobs, shelter, and essential services each person needs to prevent and end homelessness.

OUR MODEL

ECS embraces a **Housing First**¹ approach within our Permanent Supportive Housing² model of care. This nationally proven framework is centered on the belief that everyone can achieve stability in permanent supportive housing directly from homelessness and that stable housing is the foundation for pursuing other health and social services goals. This proven framework has shown to be highly effective for people experiencing chronic homelessness who will have higher service needs that may include ongoing case management, mental health or substance abuse counseling, advocacy, and assistance locating employment.

Since ECS' Permanent Supportive Housing program model provides focused services to the unhoused population who meet HUD's definition of chronically homeless³ and have been unhoused the longest. Our alignment with the complimentary tools of **Housing First** and Permanent Supportive Housing allow us to help people with disabling conditions (diagnosable substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, a developmental disability, or a chronic physical illness or disability) live independently in the community.



Our supportive services model seeks to improve physical and behavioral health outcomes, reduce the use of crisis services such as emergency room visits, reduce inpatient hospital stays, and work toward long-term housing stability.

The **Housing First** framework of care in our Permanent Supportive Housing program begins at the front door, with the principle of few programmatic prerequisites to permanent housing entry for chronically unhoused people. There are no programmatic pre-conditions such as agreeing to comply with a treatment regimen prior to entry into housing. Also, core to a **Housing First** model of care is the tenet to "screen in" rather than "screen out" applicants with the greatest barriers to housing, such as having no or very low income, poor rental histories, or past evictions.

All residents of ECS' permanent supportive housing are required to have a lease, thus full rights and protections makes this type of housing distinctly different than an interim, or temporary shelter stay. In addition, tenants or residents of permanent supportive housing are required to pay rent. However, the rent must be affordable and no more than 30% of the household's income.

Another standard element of ECS' **Housing First** model of care is that services are flexible, and voluntary, which is recognized as best practice in Permanent Supportive Housing nationally. At ECS our supportive services are proactively offered, with the belief that tenants are the primary authors of their service plan. The supportive services team persistently engage tenants and adapt services offered to ensure the goal of long-term housing stability.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES MODEL CORE PRACTICES & OUTCOMES





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ECS's permanent supportive housing model of services, at its core, is focused on improving the lives of the tenants who reside in our properties. The evidence-based practices we employ, and the outcomes that we strive to achieve for every tenant include:

- **ECS Permanent Supportive Housing Tenants Stay Housed**
- **Financial Security**
Tenants maintain or increase earned income or income benefits in which they're eligible.
- **Voluntary Services**
All services made available to tenants are voluntary, though staff are required to outreach and engage with each resident.
- **Person-Centered**
From transparency in communication to strengths-based service planning, residents are empowered with the knowledge, tool's and trust to make their own choices and forge their own solutions.
- **Trauma-informed**
An integrated framework that supports resident's recovery from the experience of homelessness, acknowledging that spending even a single night on the streets is deeply traumatizing.
- **Harm Reduction Approach**
Programming that strives to meet tenants "where they're at" in developing a service plan and interventions aimed to decrease the impact of social and/or physical consequences associated with various behaviors.
- **A Focus on Social and Community Connections**
We offer groups, activities, and events that bring tenants together. Guided by principles of social rehabilitation, behavior modeling, community-building, skill enhancing/educational groups and recreational activities provide tenants with the opportunities to socialize while building life skills and strengthening relationships within the building, as well within the community.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Case Management

ECS supportive services team provides intake and assessment within 30 days of move-in; intentional outreach on a minimum monthly basis, including three times within the first 60 days of move-in; person-centered, strengths-based case planning using Motivational Interviewing practices; linkage and referrals utilizing a warm handoff, case conferencing framework; eviction prevention and housing retention; crisis intervention; and community-building activities and groups.

Mental Health Services

ECS remains committed to its goal to increase resources and capacities to better address the mental health needs of our tenants. Licensed clinicians provide a wide range of mental health services, including assessment, treatment plan development, individual/group therapy, individual/group rehabilitative skill building, crisis management, and act as a liaison between on-site staff and community mental health providers. Clinical interventions are based in Motivational Interviewing, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Harm Reduction evidence-based practices.

Medical Services

Housing is a social determinant of health and wellness, while access to medical care and treatment of chronic conditions play a direct role in housing retention. ECS' support services team works with tenants to integrate with the medical home system of care to increase access, including onsite, to primary health care, psychiatry services, dental care, eye care, substance use treatment, wellness services, and other supports as-needed.

Healthy Aging

Leveraging a portfolio enhancement that includes a dedicated director trained in Gerontology, integration of standards of care to foster greater housing stability and quality of life among aging and older residents, including through: social activities; technology access and training; appropriate site amenities; food security, and linkages to system-wide resources, including linkage to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program to help eligible residents successfully age-in-place.

Workforce Development and Income Support

Offering onsite advocacy and enrollment for mainstream benefits programs through case management; and linkages to ECS workforce services as appropriate, including for job readiness; digital literacy; financial coaching; educational opportunities and credentialing; employment case management; barrier removal support; transitional employment opportunities; and permanent job placement and retention support.

Coordination with Property Management (PM)

In a commitment to problem-solving issues before they become crises, support services staff maintains hand-in-glove coordination with PM, including weekly staff meetings between onsite services and PM, and monthly operations meetings that additionally include leadership representation.

1) HUD Exchange.info, Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing, Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3892/housing-first-in-permanent-supportive-housing-brief/>, (last visited October 30, 2021).

2) CSH, (2013) Dimensions of Quality Supportive Housing, Retrieved from https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CSH_Dimensions_of_Quality_Supportive_Housing_guidebook.pdf

3) HUD Exchange.info, (December 20 15), Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH): Defining Chronically Homeless Final Rule, Retrieved from https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4847/heart-h-defining-chronically-homeless-final-rule/?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=6039fa9298-SNAPS+In+Foc%3A+Final+Rule+Chron+HomePart+II%3A+Policy&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-6039fa9298-19315677