

Supportive Housing: Solutions to Homelessness





Who We Are

The Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance (MHSA) is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization **working to end homelessness among individuals through advocacy and the development of housing solutions.**

For more than 30 years, MHSA has been a policy driver and a catalyst for change. Partnering with nearly 100 community-based agencies across the state, MHSA has sparked innovation, reimagining the traditional emergency shelter system to **create permanent housing offering essential wraparound services and accessible health care.**



What We Do

1.

Advocacy and Policy work

2.

Funding and Technical Assistance
– to providers and communities

3.

Innovation - launch, test, and manage models, in partnership with member agencies

4.

Convening – member agencies, partners to learn, collaborate, network

What is Supportive Housing?



Supportive housing **combines affordable housing with services** that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity.

Who needs Supportive Housing?

As of November 2024

Total Homeless Households:

13,770

At most about **30%** of households need this most expensive, intensive intervention



90%

Individuals



10%

Families



“Chronic”

Homeless long-term with disabling conditions

2,240 people



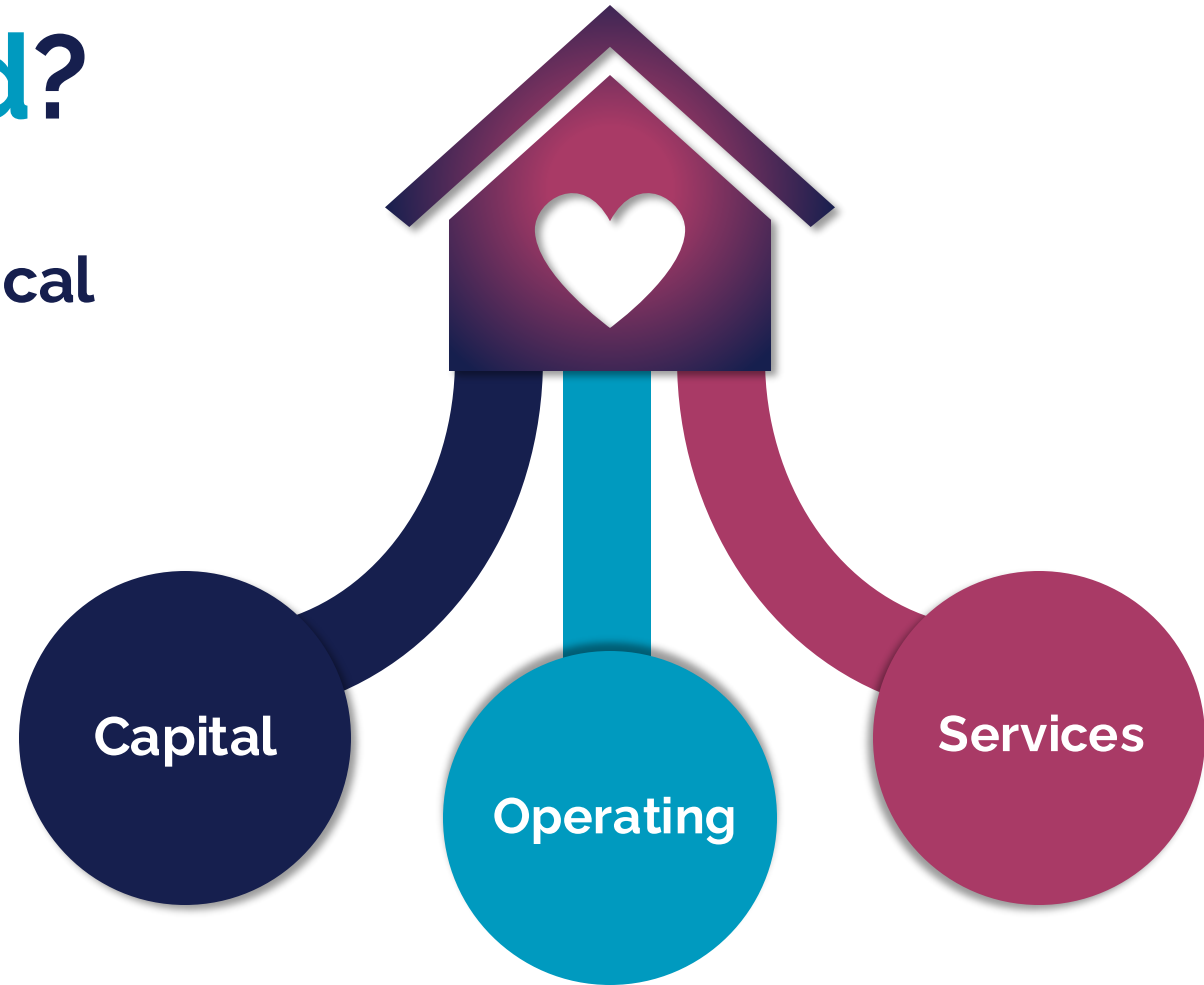
“High Acuity”

Disabling conditions and episodes of homelessness

2,180 people

How is Supportive Housing Funded?

May use **federal, state, and local sources** – public and private



Impact of Supportive Housing

Reports from two statewide supportive housing initiatives: Pay For Success (PFS), Home and Healthy for Good (HHG)

Individuals housed in supportive housing through HHG and PFS: **2,200+**

Service providers across the state: **25+**

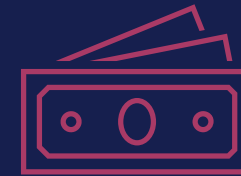
* *"The findings from this study demonstrate the effectiveness of a housing and supportive services program in reducing total health care utilization and costs for medical and behavioral health services provided to chronically homeless MassHealth members."*

[Link to BCBS of Massachusetts Foundation study](#)



85%

Of tenants stay stable in their homes **more than a year**



\$5,267

Average annual healthcare **savings per housed individual**, even while accessing "significantly more" outpatient mental health services *

Fully Investing in Supportive Housing **Benefits Everyone**



Homeless shelter numbers drop,
fewer people are living on the streets



Hospitals can devote more
emergency care to emergencies



Police can devote more time
to community safety



Supportive Housing is already part of the fabric of our communities.

There are 9,500 units in MA.



Boston & Cambridge: 3,800

Western: 1,450

Cape Cod: 200

Metro North & West: 1,900

Central: 750

South East: 1,400

Approximate Counts

Four Innovations to Add More Supportive Housing, Faster



Tenancy Support
Services using
Medicaid



Supportive
Housing Pool
Fund



Master
Leasing



Modular
Construction

Tenancy Support Services Using Medicaid

MHSA Innovation:

First-in-nation program launched by **MHSA & Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership**

Medicaid Reimbursement:

Supports permanent supportive housing through **CSPECH**

Program Milestones:

- ✓ **2005:** Pilot launched using **1115 waiver** (Medicaid flexibility)
- ✓ **2023:** Fully covered service
- ✓ Expanded beyond “chronic” to include **frequent healthcare users & behavioral health needs**

Tenancy Support Services Using Medicaid

Current Model – CSP-HI:

- Covers **any eligible person** moving into supportive housing
- Ongoing **Medicaid-funded** services for stability
- Core funding for supportive housing in Massachusetts

Supportive Housing Pool Fund

Policy:

Added to Massachusetts 2024 Housing Bond Bill – Affordable Homes Act (no funding yet, just policy framework)

Funding Strategy:

Pools funding from government, foundations, private sources

Key Benefits:

- Fills funding and service gaps
- Streamlines coordination across state housing, healthcare, service agencies
- Promotes cross-sector collaboration
- Includes data tracking

Master Leasing

Model:

Nonprofit **leases an entire property** from a property owner and then subleases units to people experiencing homelessness

MHSA Innovation:

Using this model to **accelerate new housing development**



Master Leasing

Benefits for Developers:

- Multi-year lease agreements (5+ years)
- Tenant screening, evictions, and day-to-day management handled
- Support services integrated through partnerships or a combined entity



Faster

Housing development in **18 months or less**



Lower Cost

No public cost for development



Population Fit

Supports those facing **rental barriers**

Modular Construction

- **Modular Construction:**
Volumetric – like Lego blocks
- **Micro-efficiency Units:**
Small studio with bathroom, kitchenette
- **Infill Properties:**
On a typical lot for a triple decker – 16 micro units
- **Modular Templates:**
Speedy approval, cost-efficient design



What can municipalities do to add supportive housing?

- Planning
- Siting and Zoning
- Funding
- Partnership with Developers & Service Providers



Worcester Community Housing Resources

- Repurposed motel to provide **90 units of supportive housing**
- Community garden, fitness room, ample green space
- Recovery coaches, mental health professional services
- Stores and services within walking distance



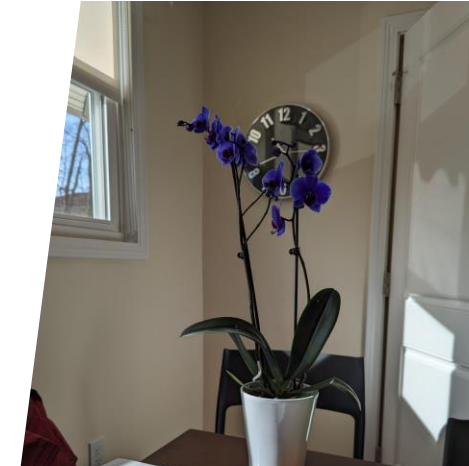
The Chelsea Commons

- Partnered with Bay Cove Human Services and local landlord in Chelsea
- Renovated old YMCA building into **58 SROs & studios and on-site offices** for Bay Cove

Remodeled June 2022



Women's Houses – Bay Cove & MHSA



Orchid House

- **11 units** in Chelsea plus Bay Cove Office on site
- First Move In February 2024



Marigold House



- **13 units** in Chelsea plus Bay Cove Office on site
- First Move In October 2023

Meet Roy

“This is the best living situation I have ever had...

This is where I am healing.”

“I wake up **in a safe environment.**

I know there are people in the building who will keep me safe no matter what.”

“Now every day is a bright sunny day.”