

RESIDENTIAL HABILITATION TIP SHEET

In this type of residential service, the provider owns or rents a home and provides 24 hour per day coverage except when the individuals are attending a day program. The direct support staff work in shifts usually of 8 hours. Four to twelve housemates share the home. Funding for a one person, shift-staffed home is available only for people who have behavioral or medical conditions that pose a serious and imminent danger of self-harm or harm to others which cannot be reasonably and adequately managed in a residence shared with other residents.

All homes must be licensed by the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

Advantages

- Shift staffing can accommodate people with very severe behavioral or medical conditions.
- To the extent possible, the individual/family may participate in selecting staff and housemates.
- Homes are designed to accommodate the needs of the individuals who live there and because they are owned by the provider may contribute to greater stability in where the person lives.
- Congregate living affords a greater variety of people for potential friendships and who have common interests and preferences for activities.
- Cost effective: no deposits are required and the home is ready to move into – furnishings, deposits, etc. are not required.
- The provider is responsible for all repairs and maintenance including appropriate furnishings and is monitored annually by the licensing authority to ensure that the home meets standards for safety and cleanliness.

Disadvantages

- High staff turnover. Average longevity of shift staff is 6 months.
- Greater likelihood of inconsistent provision of supports due to number of staff and frequency of staff turnover.
- Larger number of housemates may not suit all individuals and may limit the amount of privacy available.
- The larger number of people living in the home and participating together in activities may restrict opportunities to make friends in the neighborhood and community.
- The individual must move if she changes providers.