

# **Salish BHO Housing Plan**

## **Update: June 2018**

### **Purpose and Goals**

Salish BHO is committed to helping consumers obtain safe and affordable housing in the most independent setting possible given each consumer's individual choice, skills, and needs. With this goal in mind, the providers within SBHO have a wide range of residential and support services available for consumers.

SBHO and its providers will, as resources allow, continue to develop residential resources that meet our consumers' needs while helping them obtain the skills necessary for more independent housing, with the following goals in mind:

- Consumers will have access to housing at the most independent level possible based on their individual needs.
- Housing will be both safe and affordable.
- There will be a focus on consumer choice regarding type and location of housing.
- When consumers are hospitalized or in residential treatment, providers will work toward helping consumers protect and maintain housing.
- Providers will provide advocacy for consumers in both obtaining and retaining housing.
- Providers will continue to assess each consumer's life skills to best advocate for their needs.
- The BHO and providers will pursue subsidies and additional funds that increase access to community housing.

### **Current Resources**

SBHO mental health providers are responsible for four distinct geographical areas across three counties. Provider agencies are between one and a half to four hours apart from each other. There are two substance use providers providing supported housing services in Kitsap County only. For this reason, the BHO asks each provider to describe the resources and development plans for their areas separately.

In addition to other community resources, the providers within SBHO currently have the following housing resources available:

- Boarding Home (1 operated by a CMHC)
- ARTF (1 operated by CMHC)
- Mental Health Supported Housing
- Substance Use supported housing and Co-Occurring Supported Housing
- Section 8 Apartments
- Master lease agreements

- Transitional housing from jail
- Transitional and permanent family housing including pregnant and parenting women
- Emergency Shelters for families, individuals, and couples
- Housing repair assistance
- Stabilization services
- PATH providing outreach and engagement to the chronically homeless to move toward permanent housing.
- HARPS providing transition case management for homeless clients leaving or at risk of entering inpatient settings. Also providing financial short-term subsidies to this population as needed to secure and maintain housing. HARPS also can provide long-term housing subsidies to those who qualify.

### **Analysis of Barriers to Housing**

The BHO's plan to develop housing options for consumers is contingent not only upon available resources and funding, but on the needs of consumers. The following continue to be themes around barriers to obtaining and maintaining consumer housing as in previous years:

- **Lack of Affordable Rental Options:** In many areas the rent is higher than most consumers can afford. Also, the closing of the Section 8 list is an ongoing problem.
- **Lack of Adequate Support Services:**
  - Some consumers have challenges in functioning due to symptoms that impact their ability to manage housing independently.
    - This can lead to challenges maintaining the property in a safe and hygienic manner.
    - There may be challenges following through with appointments and other responsibilities.
    - Behaviors related to mental health decompensation can put housing at risk.
    - Disruptive behavior related to substance use by consumers can also threaten housing stability and lead to loss of housing, including allowing other non-renters stay in apartments, especially when they engage in illegal or disruptive activities.
    - Lack of adult family homes in coverage area moves consumers out of the area.
- **Lack of Financial Resources:** Limited or no income. Many clients in the Social Security application process cannot access housing. Challenges with accessing and maintaining employment.

- **Limited Access to Safe Neighborhoods**: Often the lowest rents are in unsafe neighborhoods. Another related problem is consumers having drug users or others over to the property, which results in damage, complaints, victimization, etc.
- **Rental History**: Many consumers have a poor or no rental history including an inability to pay rent or maintain the property. Poor or no credit.
- **Access to rental property**: Challenges identifying landlords who are willing and able to rent to clients. Lack of flexibility in landlord market. This includes lack of vacancies in rental market.
- **Criminal History**: Consumers with a criminal history are difficult to place.

### **Coordination with Other Organizations Around Housing Issues**

The BHO and its providers are extensively involved in coordinating with other housing organizations in each area of the region. These efforts include the 10-year plan to end homelessness, local housing committees, and statewide efforts. With integration of behavioral health, we are hoping for increased partnership between these mental health and substance use providers within the BHO.

BHO providers take part in ad hoc interventions with local governments and state agencies around appropriate housing for consumers.

The BHO has increased its presence in community housing arenas and is connecting to the housing consortiums in each area.

### **Additional Funding**

The providers within SBHO have sought additional funding to help consumers maintain independent housing. A portion of this comes from Federal Block Grant monies dedicated by the BHO for housing projects. Each agency makes a proposal for the use of this funding to SBHO.

### **Future Plans (updated June 2018)**

The BHO is working to increase collaboration with other entities within each county and promote access to Housing First models and engaging permanent supported housing models.