How Supportive Housing Works

Caritas’ Permanent Supportive Housing program serves individuals who have experienced long-term homelessness. While the physical, psychological, and emotional impact of homelessness can be devastating, we know that a stable home with the onsite support of a case manager and other resources can transform a person’s well-being and life journey. Caritas of Austin currently serves over 150 individuals each year in this program.

**COORDINATED ASSESSMENT**
As with all Caritas Housing programs, the first step to accessing services is calling our Coordinated Assessment phone line to determine eligibility and level of vulnerability.

**CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**
Eligible individuals must have experienced chronic homelessness and have a diagnosis that significantly impedes their ability to live independently at program entry.

**HOUSING FIRST**
We believe that it is nearly impossible to gain stability without first obtaining safe housing. Caritas partners with local housing providers to designate apartment units for our Supportive Housing clients throughout Austin, and clients move in upon program entry.

**ESTABLISHING RAPPORT**
Supportive Housing is a long-term program. Clients typically remain in the program for 2-3 years before successfully transitioning, while others remain indefinitely. Case managers spend the first months building a trusting relationship with clients during weekly meetings.

**ACCESSING COMMUNITY SERVICES**
A great deal of time is spent supporting clients as they access long-neglected services such as medical and dental care, disability benefits, substance recovery programs, and other community resources. Clients play an active role in their own success.

**CARITAS PANTRY**
Clients can get weekly groceries from the Caritas Pantry up to 10 times during their transition to stability.

**MENTAL HEALTH**
All Supportive Housing clients have access to Caritas’ Therapist and typically begin weekly counseling sessions when ready. This has life-changing effects in helping individuals work through the devastating impact of homelessness, past and present relationships, and other life circumstances.

**LIFE SKILLS AND FINANCIAL LITERACY CLASSES**
Clients can learn important life skills from Caritas’ Education program in classes such as “Being a Responsible Tenant” and “Making A Budget.”

**INCOME**
If clients are able to obtain earned income, they work to find employment and begin paying a portion of their monthly rent. For those who are not able to work, case managers and clients work toward obtaining appropriate disability benefits.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
Caritas case managers help clients reconnect to hobbies and passions through activities like art club, weekly walking groups, and musician’s jam.

**FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING**
While achieving goals is very fluid in Supportive Housing, the overall shift from ‘surviving to thriving’ is the biggest indicator of success. This includes achievements like attending scheduled appointments and taking medications. Successes are acknowledged at each meeting.

**REBUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**
The reality of homelessness is that many close relationships have been broken. Case managers support the rebuilding of personal relationships to help individuals regain the support network they previously had.

**TRANSITIONING SELF-SUFFICIENCY**
If and when clients are ready, case managers work with them on a plan to successfully transition out of supportive housing and into an independent living situation.

**OVER 80% OF CARITAS’ SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CLIENTS REMAIN IN STABLE HOUSING AND DO NOT RETURN TO LIVING ON THE STREETS**