

Solutions For Homelessness White Paper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UPLIFT™ Shelters are the premier Housing First solution for transitional living for the homeless. Housing First is the gold standard model for ending homelessness in your community. Housing First is proven to reduce taxpayer burdens associated with homelessness more effectively than any other method. This document briefly explains the history of the Housing First model, details the cost-saving nature of the method, and describes a range of implementation processes that may be adapted to your community.



HOUSING FIRST – TRACK RECORD OF EFFICACY & EFFICIENCY

- Housing First has a nearly forty-year track record of success across the western world¹.
 - The core proposition of Housing First is that offering a semi-permanent residence for someone experiencing homelessness is the critical first step to ending homelessness for that person. Housing First ends homelessness for approximately 8 of every 10 participants². In essence, Housing First takes the approach that housing is the *beginning*, not the end, of recovery – from temporary job loss, mental illness, substance abuse, or even criminal recidivism.
 - Over time, states such as Utah have reduced chronic homelessness by as much as 90% using the Housing First method³.
- Housing First is not only the most humane approach to ending homelessness, but also the most cost effective for your taxpayers.
 - There are three major streams of indirect costs of homelessness for your community – police interaction and crime⁴, psychiatric hospitalization⁵, and medical hospitalization⁶. Housing First reduces all three significantly due to the stabilizing nature of the solution. UPLIFT™ Shelters offer formerly homeless citizens the dignity of a warm shelter to which they have the key. This allows them to keep their belongings safe and provides incentives to comply with medical, correctional, and psychological guidance. Equally importantly, Housing First protects your most vulnerable residents from extreme weather⁷.
- These three key factors alone can reduce costs associated with homelessness by 50%, even after accounting for the cost of providing housing and services. Jail cells and hospital beds are extremely expensive for tax-payers. By putting unhoused people in transitional housing, their risk of incarceration or hospitalization is dramatically decreased⁸.

UPLIFT VILLAGES – PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Housing First is a model which can be successfully adapted to your local community. There are approximately 500,000 homeless persons in the United States on any given night⁹, and we cannot provide housing for each one of them. However, the value of Housing First lies in the scalable, flexible nature of the solution. It is a critical, and often missing, piece in the puzzle of transitioning homeless individuals from chronically unsheltered living to permanent housing and productive lives. It is especially important for populations that may not be suitable for congregate shelters, such as families or victims of domestic violence.
- Housing First can be seen as a counter-intuitive solution to homelessness and often invokes reasonable concerns and skepticism from policymakers and communities. Below are some considerations that you should make:
 - **Common Zoning and Compliance Concerns:**
 - **Zoning District Restrictions:** UPLIFT Villages may require rezoning or a variance if the land is not zoned for residential or multi-unit use.

- **Minimum Dwelling Size:** Variances may be needed to allow tiny homes below the standard minimum size. At a minimum of 80 square feet, UPLIFT villages are the market leader in space-for-cost. Nonetheless, a variance may be necessary in your jurisdiction.
- **Density Requirements:** As UPLIFT villages have a higher density than traditional housing, they may require a density variance.
- **Utility and Infrastructure:** It is crucial that tiny home villages be placed near existing hookups to sewage and electricity, as the infrastructure costs can be significant without proper planning.
- **Community Concerns:** Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) may be necessary to address local opposition or ensure compatibility. CUP's for UPLIFT villages often require fencing, lighting, or on-site security, for examples.
- **Building Codes and Fire Safety:** Tiny homes may require variances for non-standard construction, fire codes, or mobility-related regulations. UPLIFTS are engineer-stamped for all 50 states, and our firm has had unqualified success in getting the approval of state fire marshals.
- **How long will people stay?**
 - One study shows that the average length of residency before attaining permanent housing is 4.5 months¹⁰.
 - Ultimately, length of residency is a matter best left to local officials in consultation with service providers.
- **What services should be rendered to village residents?**
 - Tiny home villages across the country vary significantly in the level of supportive “wraparound” services supplied to village residents. Evidence suggests that it is cost-effective to bring resources to a tiny village, such as regular visits from social workers or substance counselors.
- **How can we address security concerns?**
 - UPLIFT™ recommends that localities placing a tiny home village hire security guards to work on shifts, build a chain link fence around the property, and place wi-fi enabled cameras on the site.
 - Communities are often concerned about the manufacture, sale, or use of drugs in tiny home villages. While this has inevitably occurred, it must be understood that drug use and mental illness are often the causes of homelessness. Such activities will occur in more public and more dangerous settings in the absence of transitional housing¹¹. Consequently, the best bet for containing and ameliorating drug use in your community is transitional housing in tandem with wraparound services to treat these conditions.

- **Who should be eligible to stay in an UPLIFT™ village?**
 - Research has shown that individuals who are not amenable to traditional shelter options may have several motivations:
 - An UPLIFT™ shelter motivates and incentivizes individuals who struggle with mental health and substance abuse to seek and adhere to treatment protocols¹².
 - Traditional shelters are often plagued by violence due to their congregate nature, which invites interpersonal conflict¹³. UPLIFT shelters afford the security and dignity necessary to avoid interpersonal conflict.
 - Traditional shelters may not be suitable for domestic violence victims, as evidence shows that women are at a high risk of being victimized in a traditional shelter setting¹⁴.
 - In practice, UPLIFT™ has seen cities chose a variety of directions for shelter eligibility. Where some cities may wish to house sober families, other cities may wish to shelter single individuals with substance abuse issues. The final determination of eligibility criteria is case-specific.
- **What other facilities should be offered?**
 - UPLIFT™ has a line of bathroom/showers, laundries, kitchens, and community centers as part of the product line ([Link Here](#)).
 - Community centers and office space can be used as sites for 12-step or religious meetings, should your jurisdiction see fit. Such spaces can also be used for health checkups, mental health counseling, and social work of various kinds.
 - Beyond physical structures on-site, common sense dictates that the availability and proximity of everyday necessities like grocery stores and bus stops should inform the placement of a tiny home village.

Additional Questions? Please contact us! ([Link Here](#))

¹ ((Tsemberis, S.J. (2010) Housing First: The Pathways Model to End Homelessness for People with Mental Illness and Addiction Minneapolis: Hazelden.))

² Pleace, N. and Bretherton, J. (2013) The Case for Housing First in the European Union: A Critical Evaluation of Concerns about Effectiveness. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 7(2), 21-41.

³ <https://www.npr.org/2015/12/10/459100751/utah-reduced-chronic-homelessness-by-91-percent-heres-how>

⁴ [Housing First Breaks the Homelessness-Jail Cycle | Urban Institute](#)

⁵ [Hospitalization costs associated with homelessness in New York City - PubMed](#)

⁶ <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.723>

⁷ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/183666>

⁸ [Housing, hospitalization, and cost outcomes for homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities participating in continuum of care and housing first programmes - Gulcur - 2003 - Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology - Wiley Online Library](#)

⁹ [It Takes a Tiny House Village: a Comparative Case Study of Barrie.pdf](#)

¹⁰ [safestay hopevillage6mos final.pdf](#)

¹¹ [Understanding the spatial distribution of tiny house villages for the homeless and the contextual factors underlying their establishment in the United States | GeoJournal](#)

¹² [implementing-tiny-homes-as-permanent-supportive-housing.pdf](#)

¹³ [Antecedents and Consequences of Violence in Homeless Shelters: Perspectives and Experiences of Service Users and Shelter Staff - Nick Kerman, Sean A. Kidd, Joseph Voronov, Timothy de Pass, Carrie Anne Marshall, Vicky Stergiopoulos, 2024](#)

¹⁴ <https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/experience-violence-lives-homeless-women-research-report>