

Foundational Community Supports Supportive Housing

Background

Addressing the issue of homelessness involves much more than providing a place to live. Foundational Community Supports (FCS) addresses this by offering benefits for supportive housing for Apple Health-eligible individuals with complex medical and behavioral health needs.

The FCS program provides two targeted Medicaid benefits, Supportive Housing and Supported Employment, under the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Project waiver. These benefits assist eligible individuals with complex health needs obtain and maintain stable housing and employment. Supports may include:

- Coaching
- Advocacy
- Information and referrals
- Linking and coordinating
- Ongoing supports

Supportive Housing services integrate supports including behavioral health services, substance use treatment, healthcare, and other community resources. This individualized approach to care coordination through the lens of supportive housing services assists beneficiaries in achieving the most successful permanent housing outcomes.

Supportive Housing services

These services identify people in need, help them obtain safe and affordable housing, and provide support so they can maintain housing. They do not replace services that are currently available, and they do not pay for room and board.

The goal is to match people to independent housing that meets their needs and provide them with services to keep housing long-term.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Evidence Based Practice

Supportive housing helps people live healthier lives by addressing their housing needs. Using evidence-based programs increases the likelihood of successful reductions in homelessness and use of higher cost care. It also facilitates measureable outcomes and data-informed decision making.

The Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) housing models are evidence-based. The programs use quality improvement tools called fidelity scales to track performance against model standards. The goal is to improve services and achieve better housing outcomes for beneficiaries.

DBHR utilizes SAMHSA's Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) as a best-practice model for FCS Supportive Housing. [SAMSHA has a PSH toolkit](#) that outlines the essential components for supportive housing services and programs for people living with behavioral health obstacles. The toolkit discusses how to develop and integrate evidence-based programs in mental health systems. SAMHSA's EBP is based on seven dimensions of permanent supportive housing:

- Choice of housing
- Separation of housing and services
- Decent, safe, and affordable
- Housing integration
- Rights of tenancy
- Access to housing
- Flexible, voluntary, services

Housing First: What it is and why is it important?

Housing first is an approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness. This model recognizes that housing is a necessity for survival and does not mandate participation in any services in order to find housing or living independently. Having this basic need met allows individuals the opportunity to improve their well-being and quality of life.

Supportive housing programs serve people with specific needs, including individuals staying in

residential care and treatment facilities and those who have experienced homelessness.

Why we choose evidence-based practices

In 2013, [SB 5732](#) and [HB 1519](#) were passed which directed the state to use evidence-based practices to ensure that interventions and policies are founded on concrete data and research, maximizing return on investment for both clients and providers. This led DBHR to participate in two nationally recognized policy academies which guided many of our activities to implement evidence-based practices.

Authority, extension, and renewal

Washington State and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) entered an agreement for a five-year plan which includes the FCS Supported Employment and Supportive Housing program under an 1115 waiver. The program aims to strengthen state efforts to improve healthcare for Washington families and reduce health care costs by addressing the social determinants of health. The state awarded a 5-year renewal of the waiver, also known as [MTP 2.0](#), in 2023 by CMS.

Administration

The state contracted with Wellpoint as the Third-Party Administrator (TPA) to select, qualify, and contract with employment and housing providers. The TPA also determines individual eligibility, authorizes FCS services, and reimburses providers.

Phone: 844-451-2828

Email: FCSTPA@Wellpoint.com

- [Wellpoint TPA website](#)
- [FCS provider map](#)

DBHR training opportunities

The DBHR training team is available for trainings and technical assistance for supportive housing.

To ensure service quality and continuous quality improvement efforts among FCS Supportive Housing providers, DBHR offers providers access to training and individualized support from DBHR Supportive Housing subject matter experts, certification opportunities to become Lead Fidelity Reviewers, and ongoing opportunities for voluntary participation in site-based FCS Supportive Housing

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Program Fidelity Reviews. These efforts provide consistent, updated, quality expectations for permanent supportive housing services while providing guidance and pathways for improvement.

Trainings offered include individual agency training, regional events and monthly webinars covering a variety of topics, the aim of which is to empower staff and providers through skill-building. These resources help providers learn more about Permanent Supportive Housing, the importance of implementing continuous quality improvement strategies, how to prepare for fidelity reviews, and provide higher quality services overall.

- To receive regular updates and announcements for upcoming housing training events please email Rayan.Orbom@hca.wa.gov
- You can receive information about Foundational Community supports through our [newsletter](#).
- You can find continuing education and resources for Supportive Housing Providers can be found [on our webpage](#).

For more information

- Visit the HCA's [Housing and Employment page](#) or email questions and comments to Housing_Assistance@hca.wa.gov.

Contact information

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