



# **A Tool to Address Supportive Housing Capacity**

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# Who We Are

- Contractor
  - Los Angeles Office of CSH, David Howden, Project Director
- Researchers
  - Josh Leopold, Urban Institute, and Martha Burt, MRB Consulting, working with the Urban Institute
- Funder
  - Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Pretest Venues
  - Los Angeles County and other interested providers and communities nationwide

# Why Create Yet Another Capacity Assessment Tool?

- Focus on *organizational* capacity to create *high quality supportive housing*
- Can be used for self-assessment, technical assistance or to guide funding decisions
- Includes components for:
  - Developing PSH units
  - Offering scattered-site housing
  - Providing property management
  - Providing adequate and appropriate supportive services
  - Working with partners, both chosen and assigned

## Steps in Developing the Tool (So Far)

- Examined existing nonprofit capacity assessment tools
  - Got good idea of general categories, areas of interest and concern.
  - But all much too general for our purposes
- Interviewed supportive housing developers, service providers, to identify “essential markers” of excellence as well as warning signs of capacity limitations
- Developed and refined rating criteria and questions
- Got reviews by interested parties
- PSH developers, service providers, funders, and CoC leads in Los Angeles and other US communities participated in several rounds of pretests, with more to come

# Potential Uses for the New Tool

- **Self-assessment**
  - To identify strengths and weaknesses, as part of strategic planning or other purposes
- **External assessment**
  - To understand the quality of supportive housing in the community for targeting or TA purposes
  - To assess community-wide capacity and gaps, and track progress
  - As part of a funder's decision-making process, in response to requests for grants, loans, or other funding to create and operate supportive housing
  - To evaluate effectiveness of TA/capacity-building efforts

# Overall Structure of the Tool

Screenener

Part A: Overall Organizational Functioning  
Commitment to Hardest-to-Serve  
Community Standing  
Performance and Quality Improvement  
Financial and Data Capabilities

Part B: Developing PSH  
Part C: Scattered-Site Housing  
Part D: Property Management  
Part E: Supportive Services

Part F: Partnering/Working with Other Organizations

Part G: Working on/Interested in Increasing Specific Capacities

## Which Parts of the Tool Would Your Organization Complete?

### All Organizations Complete:

1. Screener
2. Part A
3. Part G

Screener determines if you do Parts B, C, D, and E, and if yes, whether you complete the Primary or the Alternatives Version

If you **DO** the activity yourselves (e.g., development, supportive services), you would complete the **PRIMARY** part of the tool for that activity

If you **DO NOT** do the activity yourselves but **DO** or **WANT TO** work with other organizations to make it happen, you complete the **ALTERNATIVE** part of the tool for that activity

Part F: Agencies partnering or working with other organizations for any aspect of PSH do this part

## What Do the Primary and Alternatives Versions Cover?

- Primary Versions for Development, Scattered-Site, Property Management, and Supportive Services
  - Special practices related to nature of the PSH population
  - Building Community
  - Staffing
  - Funding
- Alternative Versions for Development, Scattered-Site, Property Management, and Supportive Services
  - What you look for in a potential partner for the specific function
  - How you work with partners that provide the specific function

# How the Tool Works

- The PART—Each Part covers a different aspect of PSH
- The CRITERIA –general categories of information we want to know about for each part (e.g., data capabilities, staffing, funding, community standing, and so on)
- The ITEMS—Each Criterion contains a number of Items. These are statements describing high-quality PSH.
- The RATING SCALE—For each Item, an organization is asked to assess the degree to which it meets the statement Mostly or Completely, Moderately, Somewhat, or Little or Not At All.
- Once the Tool is fully developed, it will be able to generate several SCORES—a Score for each Criterion and a Score for each Part.

# Other Aspects of the Tool

- The **Full Assessment Tool** currently has about 180 Items, arranged in six parts with 2 to 4 Criteria each. It has been taking total staff time of 4-6 hours to complete, usually involving several staff
- **Short Form**—The Short Form of the Tool has the same number of Parts and Criteria, but roughly half the items. Could be used for community-wide capacity scans or to prescreen organizations for funding
- **Associated Questions for an External Reviewer**—these are supplied to assist a reviewer or funder who wants to know more about an organization. They are keyed to the Parts and Criteria.
  - Basic organizational documents (e.g., org. charts, annual reports, staff descriptions, MOUs)
  - Responses to vignettes drawn from actual PSH experiences
  - Probes for additional information for each rating criterion



**The rest of the presentation focuses specifically on assessing practices and capabilities related to supportive services using the Full Assessment Tool and the Alternatives version**

# Assessment, Part E: Supportive Services--Primary

- Criterion E1: The special nature of population is reflected in the organization's supportive services activities for supportive housing tenants
  - Providing supportive services in supportive housing (health, behavioral health, housing stabilization, etc.) for the hardest-to-serve chronically homeless population is a major part of the organization's purpose
- Criterion E2: Special Practices Related to the Nature of the Population
  - The organization's policy is to "do what it takes for as long as it takes" to assure housing stability for its clients, including long-term follow-up to help clients work through crises and retain housing
  - Retention rates among PSH tenants supported by our organization are at least 90% at 6 months, 85% at 12 months, and 80% at 24 months (meets the criterion = 4; 5% lower on one or more=3; 10% lower on one or more = 2; more than 10% lower on one or more=1)

# Assessment, Part E: Supportive Services-Primary

- Criterion E3: Staffing
  - The organization's supportive services staff spend a lot of their time out of their offices, meeting clients where they live or in other community venues
  - The organization is fully aware of the special skills and attitudes needed by all staff working with supportive housing clients/tenants, and has policies and practices in place to assure appropriate skills and attitudes
- Criterion E4: Funding
  - The organization has developed strategies that allow it to be reimbursed for services delivered in the community (i.e., out of the office), 3<sup>rd</sup> party contacts (i.e., talking with a health or behavioral health care provider when the client is not present), and participation in multidisciplinary team meetings as needed

## Assessment, Part E: Supportive Services-Alternative Criterion AE.1—What Do You Look For in a Supportive Services Partner?

- We look for an organization...
  - ..that has providing supportive services in supportive housing (health, behavioral health, housing stabilization, etc.) for the hardest-to-serve chronically homeless population as a major part of the organization’s purpose
  - ...whose policy is to “do what it takes for as long as it takes” to assure housing stability for its clients, including long-term follow-up to help clients work through crises and retain housing
  - ...that is committed to “blended management,” meaning that supportive services, case management, and property management staff work collaboratively on a day-to-day basis to promote the best interests of PSH tenants

## Assessment, Part E: Supportive Services-Alternative Criterion AE.2—How Do You Work With a Supportive Services Partner?

- We work with the organization...
  - ...and its staff to achieve “blended management,” meaning that property management, case management, and supportive services staff work collaboratively on a day-to-day basis to promote the best interests of PSH tenants
  - ...to do cross-training with supportive services staff (and developer’s staff, if applicable) to assure full understanding of roles, responsibilities, and policies; periodic check-up sessions occur; new staff are oriented to building culture, roles, etc.
  - ...to assure that it supports participation by tenants and neighbors in building governance, through tenant councils that address building issues (not just plan the next barbeque), advisory committees, etc.
  - ...to assure that retention rates in the organization’s supportive housing units after move-in are at least 90% at 6 months, 85% at 12 months, and 80% at 24 months

## Feedback

- Does a tool like this seem useful?
  - Can you imagine using it for your own organization?
  - Do you see uses for it in your community?
- What issues/topics related to supportive services have we left out that you think should be included?
- What qualities do you look for in a partner to provide supportive services? Or potential grantee?
- How do you approach partnerships where you don't have full control over selecting/managing a partner?
- Other issues or comments?

## Contact Us

- We are looking for more pretesters.
- Before we can do the final step of constructing and validating the SCORING for the Tool, we need many organizations and whole communities to use the Tool—that means actually completing it, not just reviewing it.
- If you are interested in/willing to be a pretester, **please contact us.**
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