



# **The Importance of State Investment in Permanent Supportive Housing**

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**The Corporation for Supportive Housing**

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## A POLICY PROBLEM THAT HAS A SOLUTION

Homelessness in California remains a pressing social problem. On a given day in California, there are over 360,000 homeless persons; and there are between one to two million persons homeless during the year.<sup>1</sup> Homelessness is concentrated in urban areas but the suburbs and even rural areas are not immune to homelessness. Homelessness does not discriminate – there are many individuals as well as families who are homeless, men as well as women of all ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds. While some persons experience homelessness for a short time, for others the cycle of homelessness is recurring and difficult to break. Many chronically homeless individuals suffer from mental health issues coupled with substance use or chronic health problems. This segment of the homeless population often ekes out a marginal existence on the streets and in shelters, making frequent visits to emergency rooms, detox centers, and jails. *Permanent supportive housing* offers a successful and cost-effective approach for reducing long-term homelessness among this population.

## WHAT IS PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING?

*Permanent supportive housing* couples affordable, long-term housing with flexible social and health services. This model helps individuals cope with the issues that often led them to homelessness. Through voluntary case management, support groups, vocational training, medication management, life skills, and other support, many tenants are able to lead stable and productive lives. At a minimum, such housing can provide a safe place for homeless individuals to live, with constant exposure to opportunities for better health and recovery. In addition, a growing body of research suggests that stabilizing individuals in supportive housing can reduce their use of expensive public crisis services such as emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, jails and substance use treatment programs. Furthermore, these cost decreases may offset a portion of permanent supportive housing expenditures, thus making investment in this housing model attractive to those who seek to maximize the value of public resources invested in programs aimed at reducing and eliminating homelessness.

## OVERVIEW OF STATE FUNDING FOR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

While both federal and local government provide some funding for permanent supportive housing, two State programs provide essential support for these programs in California:

**The Supportive Housing Initiative Act (SHIA)**, which began in fiscal year 2000, is designed to encourage the development of permanent, affordable housing with supportive services that enables low-income and homeless Californians with disabilities to stabilize their lives. SHIA is a competitive statewide program that awards grants to cover a variety of supportive services, including health care; mental health; substance abuse prevention

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<sup>1</sup> California Research Bureau, California State Library, *Addressing Long-Term Homelessness: Permanent Supportive Housing*, Lisa Foster, Patricia Snowden, August 2003.

and treatment; family support; vocational, education and employment services; counseling and case management. In addition, SHIA funds can also be used to cover project-based rent subsidies for supportive housing units that do not have Section 8, Shelter Plus Care or other similar subsidies. This program is administered by the California Department of Mental Health and the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Eligible applicants include nonprofit service or housing agencies and local government agencies. SHIA is a major source of funding statewide for programs that serve people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

**The Integrated Services for Homeless Adults with Serious Mental Illness Program (AB 2034)**<sup>2</sup>, which began in fiscal year 2000, is designed to provide community mental health services and outreach to mentally ill adults and transition-age (18 to 25) adults who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. In addition to funding outreach, engagement and intensive case management, AB 2034 resources can be used to fund capital costs associated with housing acquisition, rehabilitation and new construction; rental subsidies; and supportive services necessary to maintain tenants' stability. The program seeks to enable people with mental illness who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to live in the most independent, least restrictive housing feasible; to engage in the highest level of work or productive activity appropriate to their abilities and experience; to self-manage their illness; and to reduce or eliminate their contact with the criminal justice system. The California Department of Mental Health also administers this program. Eligible applicants are limited to local county mental health agencies or cities with independent mental health agencies.<sup>3</sup>

SHIA differs from the AB 2034 program in the following key ways:

- ✓ SHIA funding is available to nonprofit agencies and not limited to Counties.
- ✓ Unlike AB 2034, SHIA provides for operating subsidies of up to fifteen years (which can be used to leverage debt).
- ✓ The target population for SHIA is not limited to severely mentally ill adults.

## STATE FUNDING RESULTS IN COST SAVINGS

According to program directors, many of the programs and services provided by government agencies and nonprofit organizations are actually resulting in substantial cost savings for local jurisdictions. The cost savings derive from fewer psychiatric hospitalizations, less incarceration, fewer police interventions, less crime,

*SHIA has provided funds to create stability, and calm, bright, supportive environments. People are growing, learning, and being respectful.*

– Susanna Marshland,  
Director of Transitional Services,  
Fred Finch Youth Center

<sup>2</sup> AB 2034 is sometimes referred to as AB 34, its predecessor.

<sup>3</sup> The majority of funds allocated for the AB 2034 program are awarded to existing grantees to support ongoing programs (subject to performance and state budget allocations).

fewer public nuisance problems, and increased quality of life for all involved.

Fresno provides an excellent example of the kind of positive outcomes that state investment in permanent supportive housing has achieved. Since November 2000, the program has made dramatic improvements on 142 enrollees' quality of life:

- ✦ **Homelessness reduced 80%, from 22,819 to 4,509 days**
- ✦ **Hospitalization reduced 89%, from 717 to 79 days**
- ✦ **Incarcerations reduced 68% , from 6,461 to 2,061 days**
- ✦ **90% of enrollees are maintaining housing**

These outcomes correlate to fiscal and resource savings for the county. Reduced incarcerations and psychiatric hospitalizations best illustrate this. Daily jail costs are estimated at \$ 70 per day, excluding booking, court and probation costs. Applied to 4,400 fewer days, the annual potential cost savings is \$ 308,000. The County's contracted daily psychiatric hospital rate is \$ 838. The decrease of 638 days equates to \$ 534,644 in savings. The combined potential cost savings is \$ 842,644 or 42 percent of the total program budget.

### SHIA CHANGES PEOPLE'S LIVES

While the cost savings alone are impressive, the programs have resulted in significant impacts on both the client's lives, and the way services are being delivered. In Santa Barbara, SHIA Program Manager Elodie Patarias explained that their SHIA program has actually resulted in systems change and is now a model for how services are delivered throughout the county. "By using treatment plans to benefit a client, we are changing our structure within our system... Giving a client choices and making service voluntary have been huge benefits of SHIA to our system."

*Housing needs supportive services in order for the housing to be successful. [SHIA funds] were a unique enabler.*

– Matthew Nathan  
Grants Coordinator  
Fred Finch Youth Center

In another tangible example, the Fred Finch Youth Center's Coolidge Court is one of the nation's only supportive housing programs for young adults emancipating from foster care. Of the 18 tenants with mental health diagnoses, "Over 40 percent of residents are currently enrolled in college, and many are successfully employed."<sup>4</sup> The youth who live in Coolidge Court have had tremendous success with the program and SHIA funds are a significant piece of the services provided there.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Finch Youth Center, [Annual Report](#), 2003.

SHIA data on 2,151 participants in 54 cities reveals positive results. Findings from the third year evaluation include:<sup>5</sup>

- ✦ **Eighty-six percent of participants have maintained stable housing** since the programs began.
- ✦ The **majority of participants** who had no income at enrollment **increased their income** while in the program.
- ✦ Participants also reported **improvements in their quality of life**. SHIA services dramatically increased their ability to deal with daily problems (84 percent), to control their lives (83 percent), and to deal with crisis (79 percent).

## HOW DO COMMUNITIES USE STATE FUNDING?

Communities throughout the state of California use SHIA and AB 2034 funds to provide both affordable housing and an array of supportive services including outreach, supportive housing, employment, substance use and mental and physical healthcare to individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Some specific examples of how local jurisdictions use these funds follow:

- **In Monterey County, Interim Inc.** provides social rehabilitation services designed to help adults with psychiatric disabilities to live successfully. They provide supportive housing, homeless outreach, residential treatment programs and permanent housing. Interim, Inc. is using its SHIA grant to support 15 years of rental subsidies for 28 units. A small portion of their SHIA grant is dedicated for supportive services. In addition, Monterey County receives AB 2034 funding which supports intensive case management.
- **In Alameda County, the Fred Finch Youth Center** is a nonprofit organization that provides programs and services for youth with severe emotional disturbance and developmental disabilities. Their SHIA funds support Coolidge Court, an affordable supportive housing program for youth exiting the foster care system. SHIA funds support counselors, case managers and vocational services for the youth living at Coolidge Court.
- **The Marin Housing Authority** uses SHIA funds to provide supportive services at public housing sites. The funds cover the cost of a case manager, three peer providers, and a nurse who support those currently living independently within public housing units. Marin Housing Authority also receives AB 2034 funds to provide rental subsidies and supportive services including healthcare. These funds enabled the local Mental Health department to provide services to 100 additional homeless people.

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<sup>5</sup> *California's Supportive Housing Initiative Act (SHIA) Program Evaluation Report, Fiscal Year 2002-03, California Department of Mental Health, November 2003.*

- **The County of Santa Barbara Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Association** collaborates with four partner agencies to provide supportive services for chronically mentally ill individuals as well as people at risk of homelessness or currently homeless using SHIA funds. Partners include Sanctuary Psychiatric Centers of Santa Barbara, Work Training Programs, Inc., Transitions-Mental Health Association, and the Santa Barbara Mental Health Association. Each partner provides a different critical service such as psychiatric care, advocacy for clients, mental health services or work training. The partners work together to make sure clients' needs are met in a comprehensive and integrated manner.
- **In San Diego, the Association for Community Housing Solutions (TACHS)** develops permanent supportive housing for seriously mentally ill populations. TACHS uses its SHIA funds to provide supportive services for adults with serious mental illness living at Reese Village Apartments. These funds are instrumental in helping TACHS provide support services such as a social service coordinator and other activities for their clients.

## IMPACT OF STATE FUNDING CUTBACKS

Although SHIA is not scheduled to sunset until January 1, 2009, the program received no funding allocations for FY 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. As a result, many grantees will reach the end of their three-year funding periods on June 30, 2004.

Program directors who were interviewed for this report were very candid about the critical need for state support of permanent supportive housing programs and the dire situations that formerly homeless and disabled people will face in light of impending cutbacks. For some programs the cutbacks will affect the level of service provision. For other organizations, it threatens the very existence of programs and services. Matthew Nathan, Grants Coordinator of the Fred Finch Youth Center, explained what will happen when their SHIA funding sunsets,

*We are going to have to cut a tremendous amount of services available to the program participants. For the residents, there will be higher hospitalization rates, higher emergency services utilizations and less help for clients to access other forms of housing or vocational programs. We will have to reduce staff by half.*

One director explained that their SHIA-funded staff does a lot of work in outreach and education to landlords to explain how mentally ill people can be good tenants. Without state support, these staff will not be available to intervene when things get rocky for those mentally ill clients, increasing the likelihood that some individuals may find themselves cycling back into expensive emergency systems.

Throughout the interviews, program directors discussed the importance of continued state support for permanent supportive housing programs. According to participants, key benefits of SHIA funding include the following:

- 1. SHIA fills critical funding gaps that keep people housed.** According to program directors, there are limited funding sources for supportive services, yet without these services, many people are unable to maintain stable residency in affordable housing. Bob Dolci of Emergency Housing Consortium in Santa Clara County explained, “SHIA filled a huge gap by funding supportive services because people need services to stay in housing. It’s filled a void.” Kimberly Carrol of the Marin Housing Authority expressed a similar sentiment: “For both SHIA and AB 2034, you can use the funds for services, but with Housing and Urban Development funds, you could only use it for housing. SHIA and AB 2034 gave us flexibility to create a program that was needed in our community.” SHIA funding can be used to serve a much broader population than AB 2034, which is limited to mentally ill adults.
- 2. The flexibility of SHIA allows cities and counties to tailor the use of funding to community priorities and needs.** Another important benefit of SHIA and AB 2034 funds described by those who were interviewed is the flexibility with which the funding can be used. Because the funding can be used for either supportive services or rental subsidies, local jurisdictions can apply it in the manner that makes the most sense for individual housing programs. SHIA is even more flexible in that it provides for operating subsidies of up to 15 years, which can be used to leverage debt. Jane Ginsberg of Sacramento’s Transitional Living and Community Support, Inc. commented, “The flexibility of SHIA in terms of being able to combine services and rent, and to do it however it works for a particular program, is a unique service.” In addition, cities and counties can choose the mix of supportive services that they think will be most effective at stabilizing a particular client population. Irene Ikeda of Fresno County’s Health and Human Services explained, “With SHIA you can look at what you have and don’t have available through traditional funding streams and we can allocate the SHIA monies to bridge those gaps. By bridging and melding the traditional funding streams with SHIA funds, we can create a program according to the individual needs of the people we serve—for example, we are able to use SHIA funds for security deposits, furnishings for apartments, utilities, or transportation—its’ a living funding stream.”
- 3. SHIA has expanded local capacity to provide permanent supportive housing.** Program directors also discussed the significant impact these funding programs have had on the capacity of local communities to provide permanent supportive housing. One project director commented, “SHIA came at a time when we had a lot of projects that wanted to open up affordable housing. They would have just been affordable

housing. But without the supportive services, they would not be able to have stable residents. With the SHIA funds, we were able to bring them to the table and enlarge our portfolio of supportive housing in the city.” Being able to document positive outcomes from these investments has also proved very helpful in terms of sustaining housing programs over time. Irene Ikeda of Fresno County’s Health and Human Services noted, “When we began this program, we didn’t know what was possible – reducing homelessness and hospitalizations, reducing jail time and re-incarceration. Employment numbers are growing and it has been really important to see.” SHIA is particularly important in terms of strengthening nonprofits’ capacity to provide permanent supportive housing, given that they are ineligible for AB 2034 funds.

- 4. SHIA and AB 2034 programs are important components of city and county plans to end homelessness.** Finally, directors discussed how programs funded with SHIA and AB 2034 monies are often vital to their community’s overall approach to homelessness. One project director observed, “We are 100 percent aligned with the overall goal of the city’s initiative to end homelessness, because it is permanent housing, there’s no time limit to the housing, and the supportive services are there to help people maintain housing.” Many of those who were interviewed discussed how programs supported with SHIA and AB 2034 funds are integrated into local Continuum of Care plans encouraged by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, as well as local 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness, currently promoted by the Bush Administration’s Interagency Council on Homelessness. As a result, SHIA and AB 2034 funds increase the competitiveness of local communities seeking federal funding.

## CONCLUSION

State funding for permanent supportive housing programs is critical since this level of support is typically unavailable from local government and most private foundations. SHIA and AB 2034 funds have enabled counties to reduce incarcerations; to help adults with substance use, health and mental health issues lead more productive lives; and to decrease the amount of emergency and crisis services used by homeless individuals. Permanent supportive housing offers a way of stabilizing individuals who experience chronic homelessness. Admas Kanyangia of Skid Row Housing summed it up perfectly. She noted that once people are housed, “You have to address the reasons why people became homeless [to keep them housed]. It’s part of a process of self-education. If you don’t address the reasons people become homeless, people will remain homeless.” Experience has shown us that, without support services, formerly homeless people will cycle back into homelessness and will cost government more in the long run.

No city or county has the resources to meet the complicated needs of homeless individuals on its own without federal and state assistance. While California has been successful in

competing for its share of federal funding to support permanent supportive housing, the need far exceeds current funding levels. State investment in permanent supportive housing can leverage federal and local funds and provide a cost-effective response to homelessness. Furthermore, these programs have benefits not only for low-income and homeless persons throughout California, but also for the communities that care for them.

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

*Kimberly Carrol* – Senior Program Manager, Marin Housing Authority

*Sam Cobbs* – Director of Program Services, Larkin Street Youth Services

*Bob Dolci* – Director of Single Divisions, Emergency Housing Consortium

*Francisco Escobar* – Staff Analyst, Fresno County Health and Human Services

*Craig Fenner* – Director of Supportive Housing, Skid Row Housing Trust

*Jane Ginsberg* – Executive Director, Transitional Living and Community Support, Inc.

*Anthony Girssin* – Contract and Compliance Officer, St. Vincent de Paul of San Diego

*Anthony Hatcher* – Program Director, Supportive Services Coalition for Independent Living, Turning Point of Central California

*Irene Ikeda* – Staff Analyst, Fresno County Health and Human Services

*Admas Kanyangia* – Program Manager, Skid Row Housing Trust

*Jan Kleinfelter* – Program Director, Sandy Shores

*Maria Lindley* – Program Director, Interim, Inc.

*Ron Maloney* – Associate Director, Interfaith Community Services

*Susanna Marshland* – Director of Transitional Services, Fred Finch Youth Center

*Barbara Mitchell* – Executive Director, Interim, Inc.

*Matthew Nathan* – Grants Coordinator, Fred Finch Youth Center

*Mathew Packard* – Vice President of Development, St. Vincent de Paul of San Diego

*Elodie Patarias* – Program Manager, Santa Barbara Alcohol, Drug & Mental Health Association

*Dion Roberts* – Program Manager, San Francisco Department of Human Services

*Michelle Borre* – Program Director, Home Center, Turning Point of Central California

*Kimberly Russell Shaw* – Executive Director, Association for Community Housing Solutions

*Dorene Toutant* – Director of Residential Services, A Community of Friends

## **APPENDIX B: PROFILES OF CALIFORNIA SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS**

This appendix presents profiles of four permanent supportive housing programs around the state of California. They provide an in-depth picture of how local programs make use of SHIA funding to support programs for formerly homeless individuals.

### **Turning Point of Central California – Fresno County, CA Supportive Services Coalition for Independent Living and Home Center**

Mr. Henderson\* is a veteran in his mid-60s. For over 10 years, he had been homeless and living on the streets, estranged from his family, and isolated. He rode his bike everywhere and sometimes, he would drop-in at Home Center, but would always refuse any housing or services offered by the program that serves homeless mentally ill adults in Fresno County. After several months of consistent outreach to Mr. Henderson, however, he eventually agreed to move into housing. Now, Mr. Henderson lives in his own apartment, actively participates in social activities with other program participants, and is in his second semester of the Horticulture program at Fresno County City College. Moreover, he has reunified with his family, including a sister whom he had not seen for years while he was homeless. With the ongoing support he receives from his personal service coordinator and the numerous supportive services he is linked to, Mr. Henderson is able to maintain his housing while engaging in activities that connect him to the larger community and enrich his life.

In Fresno County, Turning Point of Central California, provide individuals struggling with homelessness and mental illness with both the housing and supportive services they need to maintain stable lives through two programs, Home Center which is funded partially with AB 2034 funds, and Supportive Services Coalition for Independent Living (SSCIL) which receives SHIA funds. In collaboration with the Fresno County Health and Human Services Department and the Housing Authority, both programs serve a total of 218 individuals and families placed in scattered housing throughout the county, where they pay 30 percent of their income towards rent.

The personal service coordinators (PSC), who conduct frequent home visits to tenants, are the cornerstone of both programs. Each PSC maintains a very low case load which allows them to provide intensive case management services and to build positive relationships with each tenant. Through the PSC, tenants have access to a multitude of supportive services including life skills training such as homemaking and cleaning; medication management; tenant rights education; vocational and educational services; peer support groups; money management and assistance with obtaining benefits; treatment and recovery

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\* Name of program participant has been changed to protect confidentiality.

services; and health and mental health services. While services are all voluntary, tenants are required to remain in contact with their PSC while living in the permanent supportive housing programs, as part of the overall goal of maintaining tenants in housing.

One staff member described the immense benefits of permanent supportive housing such as the housing provided by the SHIA-funded program, SSCIL,

*Our biggest achievement has been assisting participants with securing personal housing which has given them dignity and enhanced their personal self-esteem. They've become more social and more involved in their community. They are accessing resources they need and are attending education classes and social activities.*

Another staff member discussed about the importance of the AB 2034 program, Home Center,

*Our program challenges the traditional mental health system. AB 2034 is effective because it doesn't do anything typically. The motto is 'whatever it takes' so we designed the program to do whatever it takes to meet a consumer where they're at and to engage them in services. The homeless mentally ill miss out because they don't succeed in the traditional mental health system — they need intensive support and contact.*

Together, both programs are reaching out to individuals and families affected by homelessness, mental illness and poverty. A large population served by the AB 2034 program is also persons who have been involved with the criminal justice system. Through both of these permanent supportive housing programs, not only are individual lives positively impacted, but also they are contributing to Fresno County's goal to end homelessness in ten years.



### **Larkin Street Youth Services – San Francisco, CA** **The Ellis Street Apartments**

After having lived most of her life in foster care and being homeless for a brief period after emancipating, Angela\* thought she would never find herself in her own place at Ellis Street Apartments. Before moving here, Angela felt her only options were going into a shelter where she feared drug addiction, prostitution, being taken advantage of, and a path to nowhere. Now, all that has changed—with the support of her case manager and resident peer advisors at Ellis Street Apartments, as well as vocational and educational opportunities, health care, and recovery support available through Larkin Street Youth Services, Angela feels options opening up to her. Now she's taking GED classes, doing some volunteer work, and thinking about working part-time at a local restaurant. She's also taken up knitting. Just knowing that she has a safe, secure, and comfortable place to come home to helps Angela focus on her life goals. She feels she's accomplishing a lot and knows she is capable of doing even more.

Ellis Street Apartments, located in the Tenderloin neighborhood in San Francisco, opened its doors to twenty-four young people, ages 18-24 in the fall of 2000. Of the twenty-four units at this newly-rehabilitated building, six units are reserved for young people who are HIV positive. Thirty-five percent of the formerly homeless tenants at Ellis Street Apartments have been emancipated from the foster care system.

Ellis Street Apartments provide the support and life skills-building that these young people need in order to live independently. Tenants pay 30 percent of their income towards rent. On-site, the full-time case manager works with the young tenants on attaining vocational and educational goals, improving life-skills, maintaining their housing, and increasing income stability. The case manager also provides them with essential links to resources in the community. In addition, the young people have access to a full continuum of services

available through Larkin Street Youth Services, a nonprofit with 20 years of experience serving homeless and runaway youth. These services include a medical clinic, including an HIV specialty clinic; mental health and substance abuse services; a career mentoring program; and vocational training; all of which are in walking distance from their home.

As a SHIA beneficiary, Ellis Street Apartments developed a unique program to address the needs of its tenants. In addition to funding a full-time case manager position, SHIA funds cover the wages of two Resident Advisor positions, who are themselves tenants in the building. The Resident Advisors are an essential part of the supportive services available to the young people living at the Ellis Street Apartments, providing peer support, conflict mediation, and facilitation of community meetings. They are also trained to provide their peers with employment assistance such as resume-building and staffing the on-site resource center where tenants can access computers, the internet, and a fax machine, all essential during a job search. The Resident Advisors gain valuable leadership skills and vocational training through the year-long positions and often move on to permanent full-time positions in other Larkin Street Youth Services programs or at other community-based organizations.

Continuing some components of Ellis Street Apartments' supportive services will be a challenge when their SHIA funding sunsets in June. In particular, the Resident Advisor positions, which have been instrumental in building tenants' skills and in maintaining stability for the building community, are in jeopardy of being cut. One staff member states how permanent supportive housing programs such as Ellis Street Apartments are integral to preventing chronic homelessness:

*Our program is very inexpensive—it costs about \$175K a year to house twenty-four young people and give them the intensive supportive services they need to maintain housing and gain independence. That's a huge investment for their future because they are not going to be part of the chronic homeless population. They're being diverted from the emergency rooms, mental health crisis, and the criminal justice system. Ellis Street Apartments serves a population that is not being served.*



### **Skid Row Housing Trust – Los Angeles, CA Skid Row Permanent Supportive Housing Programs**

Surrounded by an industrial business improvement district, the toy district, the historic district and the wholesale district sits the 50 block area of Skid Row. Historically a low income residential neighborhood that started when the railroads were being built, the Skid Row of today is home to more than 5,000 homeless people. Skid Row Housing Trust, a nonprofit housing developer started in 1989, works to preserve and rehabilitate affordable housing in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles. Currently, Skid Row Housing Trust runs nineteen buildings in the area. The buildings house close to 1,200 individuals who are formerly homeless, low income and living with disabilities (usually mental health problems or dual diagnosis). Many of their tenants are living with HIV/AIDS, are in recovery from substance use, or battling mental health issues. Some have a history of incarceration or were Vietnam veterans and all were once homeless.

Skid Row Housing Trust is a SHIA beneficiary. The \$1.2 million it is receiving over three years goes towards providing supportive services to residents in seven of their nineteen buildings. According to the Director of Supportive Housing,

*SHIA money really helped us to take a step back and evaluate ourselves as an agency. We looked at everything all the way across the board – intake, property management, case management, needs of residents, etc. What we did as a result is we changed the entire agency. SHIA allowed this agency to completely change the way it interacts with a very impacted population in an impacted area.*

The resources SHIA provides allowed Skid Row Housing Trust to revise its intake process and offer residents much needed services. Now the staff has been able to help people with basic skill sets to live and make healthy decisions. In addition, the funds helped Skid Row Housing Trust hire a more professional staff. Almost all of their case managers now have

master's or bachelor degrees in social work. As a result, the staff has been able to integrate educational knowledge with real life experience.

Another important benefit of SHIA is the new data collection system the Skid Row Housing Trust installed that will make data collection much easier. Most importantly, it will provide data to help inform future program decisions. Already Skid Row Housing Trust can point to program successes such as longer housing stays for residents; decline in evictions; decline in destruction of property; and decline in resident-on-resident assaults – specifically in the context of SHIA buildings.

More importantly, these statistics boil down to profound human success stories the staff have witnessed and catalyzed. For example, many of the residents at Skid Row Housing Trust buildings have worked through personal challenges, gained life skills and have been hired to be property managers by Skid Row Housing Trust. A staff member explained, “Many of our property managers have struggled with addiction or a disability. Now they are excellent property managers... If you can provide a healthy consistent environment, you see amazing things.”

Another challenge facing the residents is the assortment of temptations that await them outside their doors. Once away from the oasis of the Skid Row Housing Trust permanent supportive housing, a sea of drug dealers and gangsters awaits. The Director of Supportive Housing sums it up nicely, “The negativity in this environment is so palpable; you have to provide positive stuff at the same level to combat it.”

The SHIA funds are vital in helping the Skid Row Housing Trust do just that.



## **Interim, Inc. – Monterey, CA**

### **Sandy Shores**

It's early morning at the Red Eye café and residents are trickling in to get their morning cup of coffee. The woman serving coffee at the café was recently homeless, battling mental illness and living on the streets. Now she is employed part-time at the café and grateful to be living in permanent housing. The Red Eye serves only residents of Sandy Shores, a new affordable housing complex for homeless adults with major psychiatric disabilities. The café's profits are used to fund future social activities for its residents.

Located on the former Fort Ord in Monterey County, Sandy Shores is comprised of four multi-family housing units providing 28 units of housing. Opened in April of 2004, Sandy Shores offers its residents a variety of support services including case management, social support groups, supported education and employment. Monterey County Behavioral Health provides case coordination, medication support and representative payee services. A tenant's rent is based on 30 percent of his or her income.

Sandy Shores is one of Interim, Inc.'s eleven programs providing a bridge from homelessness to independent living. Interim, Inc., a non-profit public benefit corporation founded in 1975, provides a continuum of residential treatment, affordable housing, and social rehabilitation services for adults with psychiatric disabilities residing in Monterey County. Interim, Inc. manages both the service provision and property management at its various housing sites.

Staff at Sandy Shores work hard to combat the stigma attached to mental illness by creating treatment plans that respect the resident's choices. As one Sandy Shores staff person explained, "The residents at Sandy Shores are living independently, learning to manage their mental illness, and beginning to believe they can lead normal lives." Sandy Shores also offers its residents a source of support and pride. The community council, which is an advisory board comprised of tenants, provides the Sandy Shores staff with ongoing advice and suggestions regarding future programs and services at the housing complex. In fact, the chair of the community council meets weekly with Sandy Shores staff to represent the

interests and desires of the residents. The community council has been instrumental in offering tenants an opportunity to gain leadership skills and self-advocacy skills. Many see how effective they can be at working towards group decision making processes and as a result many tenants are now beginning to pursue work, school or other vocational pursuits.

Sandy Shores is a SHIA beneficiary. The SHIA funds are used for some of the supportive services provided to residents but primarily, the funds will be going towards covering 15 years of rental subsidies at Sandy Shores. A portion of the SHIA funding also went into some of the furnishings at Sandy Shores. SHIA funding was instrumental for Interim, Inc., but Sandy Shores is the product of blended support from more than 30 different funding sources – both public and private. Locating future funding support for Sandy Shores remains a challenge and the staff work diligently to line up the funding needed to maintain ongoing services for residents.