

How Oxford Houses Help The Criminal Justice System

- ◆ **About 70% of the more than 2 million people in jail or prison are alcoholics or other drug addicts.**
- ◆ **Recidivism for drug addicts and alcoholics is over 50% in the first 18 months after release.**
- ◆ **Going back to the old neighborhood after jail or prison may be the worst place for the re-covering addict to go – too many using bud- dies and drug dealers.**
- ◆ **Living in an Oxford House provides the time, peer support and self-confidence to as- sure long-term sobriety without relapse.**
- ◆ **Oxford Houses and Oxford Chapters work with drug court and re-entry judges and probation and parole officers to acquaint them with Oxford House™.**

Sample Cost Comparisons

The average *annual* cost to the public to support an individual in jail or prison ranges from \$23K to \$50K.

The average *annual* cost for a traditional halfway house bed is between \$23K and \$40K.

The average annual cost per bed in the typical therapeutic community ranges from \$18,000 to \$28,000 per year.

Residents in an Oxford House™ pay the cost of their own household expenses in equal shares. The average cost to start an Oxford House using the trained Oxford House World Services staff to establish and monitor a network of homes is less than \$300 per bed per year – less than 1% the average cost of less effective alternatives. Resident's equal share of expenses averages about \$119 a week [range \$95 - \$190].

Questions and Answers

Q. How can Oxford Houses help those with a Substance Use Disorder appearing before a drug or re-entry court?

A. By providing a nice – but no nonsense – place to live that is supportive of staying clean and sober for the long-term.

Q. How can Oxford Houses be established to serve those who are willing to recover from a Substance Use Disorder?

A. Oxford House, Inc. central office can send trained, super-vised field workers to develop clusters of homes. It costs about \$80,000 a year to train and supervise an outreach worker. Each outreach worker or field representative can start about 4 new houses a year [average 8.2 residents] and monitor up to 40 houses.

Q. What are Start-up Revolving Loan Funds?

A. Some states have a revolving loan fund to make start-up loans so that six or more recovering individuals can borrow up to \$4,000 to rent a house and establish an Oxford House™. The federal guidance for such loans [42 USC 300x-25] can be downloaded from www.oxfordhouse.org under “About Us/History.” Where such funds do not exist, OHI can establish and manage loan funds with monies provided by individuals, foundations or churches.

Q. Do Oxford Houses work for those participating in a drug court program or getting out of jail?

A. Yes. Many of the over 2,600 Oxford Houses established since 1989 have a working relationship with drug courts and correctional treatment programs and over 75% of existing Oxford House residents have done jail time.

Q. Do Oxford Houses assure that a person in a drug court program has a safe place to live?

A. Yes, if the person stays clean and sober and pays his or her equal share of household expenses [averages \$119 a week – range \$95 – \$190]. If any resident uses alcohol or illicit drugs, the group votes him or her out of the house and lets the drug court personnel know. Studies have shown that most Oxford House residents do not relapse and do pay their equal share of household expenses. In 2018, 35,343 individuals lived in the nation's Oxford Houses and only about 16.7% had to leave because of relapse.

Oxford House™

Working With Drug Courts and Correctional Facilities



Going back to where you came from after treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction almost always spells failure – a return to old behavior.

Mark Spence, May 5, 1991
CBS Program “60 Minutes”

Oxford House, Inc. is the 501(c)(3) non-profit umbrella organization of the national network of individual Oxford Houses.

The primary purpose of Oxford House, Inc. is to establish enough self-run, self-supported recovery houses to provide an opportunity for every recovering individual to learn a clean and sober way of life – forever.

Income is used to expand the network of Oxford Houses by providing trained outreach workers to establish new houses and to provide central service support to existing houses and to work with participating organizations to accept referred individuals.

“Working With Drug Courts and Correctional Facilities” discusses how establishment of local networks of Oxford Houses can reduce recidivism for those involved with the criminal justice system.

Internet Address: www.oxfordhouse.org
Vacancy Website: www.oxfordvacancies.com



Substance Use Disorder Recovery

Substance Use Disorders [SUD] are chronic and progressive problems. Those with a SUD become “hooked” on their drug of choice and physically all cells in their bodies call out for a steady supply of the drug. This physical compulsion causes the mind to trigger any kind of behavior needed to get the next drink of alcohol or an illicit drug “fix.” Once addicted, the only “cure” is total abstinence – stopping the use of the alcohol and illicit drugs – forever.

Stopping the use of illicit drugs and alcohol use is difficult, but not impossible. Most addicts go through a number of periods where they stop use because they have run out of alcohol or their drug of choice. When an addict stops, he or she feels sick because of withdrawal; i.e., every cell in the body is calling out for the drug and the body shakes, sweats and produces great anxiety. The addict really “feels” he or she is going to die unless the drug of choice is obtained quickly. This is called detoxification and it usually ends within minutes after the addict has ingested his or her drug of choice. However, for a fortunate few who can go three to seven days without taking their drug of choice, detoxification is the beginning of a whole new life. Short-term custody in a hospital setting or a supervised detoxification facility or a jail cell is the usual way to stop an addict’s compulsive use of alcohol and drugs. Staying stopped is the more difficult challenge but Oxford Houses can help.

In the drug court setting or upon release from incarceration, recovering individuals can be put into groups for starting new Oxford Houses or can get into an existing Oxford House.

Oxford House World Services is able to train and supervise outreach workers to provide on-site development of strong networks of self-run, self-supported houses. The average cost for such out-reach workers is \$80,000 per year including salary and expenses.

The average outreach worker can start 4 new houses a year and monitor up to 40 houses to make sure they stay on track.



Staying Stopped

“Oxford House grew out of the need for many of us to begin a new life without fear of backsliding because of loneliness or renewed dependency on former addicted companions. Throughout its existence, Oxford House has combined the concepts of self-support and responsibility with a fellowship having the common purpose of continued and comfortable sobriety for long-term recovery.”

From Tradition One
Oxford House Manual ©

Behavior change is never easy and it is especially difficult for the individual who is recovering from addiction. While the physical craving for drugs ends within a few days, the mind tries to trick an individual into returning to alcohol or illicit drug use. When you think about it, the mind is doing what comes naturally – for-getting pain and remembering pleasure.

Professionals speak often of “denial” when dealing with recovering addicts. The addict really does not believe that alcohol and illicit drug use produces harm. The addict “remembers” the good feeling that came from the alcohol or illicit drugs and wants to recapture it. At the same time, he or she forgets the violence, irrational behavior (fights, loss of job and family), and physical withdrawal that make one feel sick (hang-overs).

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are twelve-step programs that have helped millions of recovering addicts to change their behavior to adopt lifelong abstinence. Unfortunately, many recovering individuals need more support than AA and NA alone. Oxford Houses provide the additional support and the time needed to learn new behavior. Over 80% of those who live in an Oxford House stay clean and sober.



How Oxford Houses Work

Oxford Houses are residential houses that groups of recovering individuals rent to live together in an environment supportive of recovery from addiction. Each house is self-run and self-supported following a standardized system of democratic operation. Each group obtains a charter from Oxford House, Inc. [OHI], the umbrella organization for the national network of individual Oxford Houses.

An Oxford House charter has three basic requirements:

- the group must be democratically self-run,
- it must be financially self-supported, and
- it must expel any resident who returns to using alcohol or illicit drugs.

The standardized system of operations has evolved from the 44-year history of Oxford House and permits replication of Oxford Houses throughout the country. All Oxford Houses work together to assure mutual support and quality control. The availability of start-up loans makes it possible to start new houses. In many states, the machinery is in place to provide groups of six or more recovering individuals with money to rent a house to start a new Oxford House. The loan is repayable over 24 months.

Technical assistance is required. Some courts and correctional systems have made grants to OHI to get the technical assistance needed to establish Oxford Houses. The initial one-time cost to start and service an Oxford House is minimal. Once started, the residents operate the house themselves under the proven system of disciplined, democratic operation and pay all household expenses including rent to the landlord. For more information write:



Oxford House, Inc.
1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 300
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone (301) 587-2916
E-mail: Info@oxfordhouse.org
Website: www.oxfordhouse.org