

## Oxford House 2009 Profile Series

### An Evaluation of the Network of Oxford Houses

# Washington State



## *Oxford House – Providing Time for Recovery*

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## Oxford House, Inc.

Oxford House, Inc. is the umbrella organization of the national network of more than 1,300 individual Oxford Houses. Its central office is located at 1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 300, Silver Spring, Maryland near where the first Oxford House™ started in 1975.

Oxford House™ is a concept and system of operations based on the experience of recovering alcoholics and drug addicts who learned that by living together in a disciplined, self-run, self-supported home they could help each other to become comfortable enough in sobriety to avoid relapse. The Oxford House Manual® is the basic blueprint that provides the organization and disciplined democratic structure that permit groups of recovering individuals to successfully live together in recovery. All Oxford Houses are *rented* ordinary single-family houses in good neighborhoods.

The national network of Oxford Houses works because the umbrella organization assures the quality of Oxford Houses through a time-tested system of operation, encourages expansion through partnerships with individual state governments, fosters independent outcome research and assures the civil rights of residents to locate in good neighborhoods. Its 34-year old system of operation provides individuals recovering from alcoholism and/or drug addiction with the time, peer support and confidence building skills to become comfortable enough in sobriety to avoid relapse or return to addictive use of alcohol and/or drugs.

Following enactment of §2016 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 – PL 100-690, Washington was one of the first states to begin development of a network of Oxford Houses.

Eighteen of the 210 Oxford Houses in Washington today are over 15 years old. Fifty-six of the houses are more than 10 years old. This report, based on August/September 2009 data collection, updates the profile of who is served by the statewide network of Oxford Houses in Washington. It is a follow-up evaluation to the 2006 Evaluation based on 2006 data collection. That evaluation is downloadable from the Oxford House website: [www.oxfordhouse.org](http://www.oxfordhouse.org). It provides additional background material about the development of the strong statewide network of Oxford Houses in Washington.

Silver Spring, Maryland

January 15, 2010

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\*\* Sheri Glisson took office January 1, 2010 and is an ex-officio member of the board.

Table 1  
**Washington State Resident Profile September 2009**

Number of Women's Houses:	<b>61</b>	Number of Women Residents:	<b>506</b>
Number of Houses For Men:	<b>149</b>	Number of Men Residents:	<b>1,240</b>
Total Network of Washington Houses:	<b>210</b>	Total Number of Residents:	<b>1,746</b>
Average Age:	<b>37.7 Years</b>	Age Range	<b>18-77 Years</b>
Cost To Each Person Per Week [average]: [Range \$75 - \$130]	<b>\$90</b>	Rent Per Group Per Month [average]: [Range \$1,200 - \$4,500]	<b>\$2,300</b>
Percent Military Veterans	<b>13.8%</b>	Average Years of Education [all residents]:	<b>12.4</b>
Residents Working 10/30/08 <sup>1</sup> :	<b>53.6%</b>	Average Monthly Earnings: <sup>2</sup>	<b>\$1,793</b>
Percent Addicted To Drugs or Drugs and Alcohol:	<b>78%</b>	Percent Addicted to Only Alcohol:	<b>22%</b>
Race –		Marital Status –	
White;	<b>86.2%</b>	Never Married	<b>53.5%</b>
Black;	<b>3.4%</b>	Separated	<b>7.9%</b>
Hispanic	<b>2.6%</b>	Divorced	<b>33.3%</b>
Asian	<b>1.1%</b>	Married	<b>4.7%</b>
Native American	<b>4.4%</b>	Widowed	<b>.6%</b>
Pacific Islander	<b>.9%</b>		
Other	<b>1.6%</b>		
Prior Homelessness:	<b>70.1%</b>	Average Length of Homelessness:	<b>9.5 Mos.</b>
Prior Jail:	<b>86.4%</b>	Average Jail Time:	<b>17 Mos.</b>
Average AA or NA Meetings Attended Per Week:	<b>3.9</b>	Percent Going To weekly Counseling in addition to AA or NA meetings:	<b>57.6%</b>
Average Length of Sobriety of House Residents:	<b>17.7 Mos.</b>	Residents Expelled Because of Relapse:	<b>20.8%</b>
Average Length of Stay In An Oxford House:	<b>7 Mos.</b>	Average Number of Applicants For Each Vacant Bed:	<b>+2.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> The State of Washington provides a transition subsidy for those in treatment to subsidize the equal expense payment in an Oxford House. Because approximately 400 of the Washington Oxford House residents who completed the survey had lived in a house less than six months, many were still in receipt of the subsidy and while “looking for a job” had not yet been successful or begun. The average income is based on those working. In other states about 90% are employed at any given time.

<sup>2</sup> Employed residents.

# Washington State and Oxford House

## *A Partnership That Works*

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### Background

The 2006 Evaluation of Washington State Oxford Houses started as follows:

“Today in Washington 1,257 recovering individuals are safely living in 156 Oxford Houses in the state and are gaining the time, peer support and confidence needed to stay clean and sober without relapse. The profile data used in this report was primarily collected in the summer and fall of 2005 when there were fifteen fewer houses and 115 fewer residents in the state.”

Growth in the number of Oxford Houses in the state continued throughout 2007, 2008 and 2009. Many more recovering individuals now have the opportunity to live in an Oxford House in Washington. At the end of 2009 there were 212 Oxford Houses in the State of Washington – 151 for men; 61 for women. In terms of recovery beds, there were 1,256 for men and 506 for women for a total of 1,762.<sup>3</sup> On average, during the course of a year, about 4,200 individuals in Washington live in an Oxford House, with nearly 3,400 staying clean and sober.

The passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 was a catalyst for states to become interested in establishing them in their states. Section 2036 of that law required each state to establish a revolving loan fund to help six or more recovering individuals to establish a self-run, self-supported recovery home based on the Oxford House Model.

Washington was one of the first states to ask Oxford House, Inc. to help establish self-run, self-supported Oxford House recovery homes in the state. Following enactment of the recovery home provision in the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, Oxford House, Inc. [OHI] set up a central services office to provide technical assistance for establishing Oxford Houses throughout the country. An early user of the assistance was the landlord of the original Chalet Oxford House in Vancouver who asked for help to start a women’s Oxford House [May 1, 1990]. Shortly thereafter the Drug and Alcohol Services of the state entered a contract to have outreach workers sent to the state to help establish more recovery homes.



**Oxford House – Edmonds**  
8704 216<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Edmonds, Washington 98026  
10 Men Established March 1, 1990

In August 1990, OHI sent Mark Spence to help get Oxford House – Edmonds started. That house led to the landmark Supreme Court case that provided clarification of the Federal Fair Housing Act that made it clear that recovering alcoholics and drug addicts are within the class ‘handicapped’ and therefore protected against

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<sup>3</sup> 17 of the houses for women – having 141 - recovery beds – also accept women with children.

discrimination under that law.<sup>4</sup> Because the residents are a protected class local government must make a reasonable accommodation in their zoning laws so that, in effect, residents of Oxford House living as a group are treated for zoning purposes similar to an ordinary biological family.

A Washington statewide network of 212 Oxford Houses – with an aggregate of 1,762 recovery beds – has grown out of the initial couple of houses. This evaluation of Washington State Oxford Houses is based on profile data collected in the August/September 2009.

The development of the Washington Network of Oxford Houses occurred in large part because Ken Stark – then Director of the state’s alcohol and drug agency – was supportive of the concept from the beginning. As soon as the federal government issued regulations under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 [November 1989], Ken Stark made provision for the state to establish the recovery home revolving loan fund and provided Oxford House, Inc. with a grant to provide technical assistance to those who wanted to establish Oxford Houses in the state. This action set the stage for the largest statewide network of Oxford Houses in the country.

The 212 Oxford Houses in the State of Washington provide space for 1,762 beds for individuals recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction to gain the time, peer support and discipline needed to achieve sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse. Each Oxford House is a rented single family home in a good neighborhood and was started with a start-up loan of \$4,000 from the Washington Recovery Home Start-up Revolving Loan Fund. Once established the residents of each house not only repay the start-up loan but also pay all on-going household expenses.

Three characteristics stand out in any evaluation

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<sup>4</sup> *City of Edmonds, WA v. Oxford House, Inc., et. al.*, 514 U.S. 725 (1995)

of Oxford House: [1] low cost, [2] effective replication, and [3] good outcomes. The Oxford House model provides a blueprint for realizing each of these characteristics but it begins with a good partnership between Oxford House, Inc. [OHI] and the state – a strong one for nearly 20 years.

### **Establishment of Self-Help Quality Control**

Throughout the State of Washington clusters of individual houses organize together in Chapters made up of six to twelve houses. Currently there are 27 Chapters throughout the state.<sup>5</sup> Once a month the officers of each house get together to share the strength, experience and hope of the members of their respective houses. This process helps all houses to avoid the mistakes of a single house and to adopt the good things a house does to make itself function well. It also provides a venue where members of the chapter can help houses having problems to solve the problems early so that they do not develop into major crisis.

Like the individual houses, the Chapters elect officers and run meetings in a business-like way. Among the common celebrations of sobriety exercised by the Chapter is the organization of picnics, dances, dinners and sporting events to help individuals in the Oxford House family to develop and enjoy new socialization centered on recovery rather than addiction.

The Chapters in Washington State join together to support a State Association of Oxford Houses. Each year the State Association holds a state convention and a camp out and helps organize Oxfest, a celebration of recovery held during Recovery Month each September.

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<sup>5</sup> There are an average of about 8 houses per chapter with a range of 3 to 14. The Chapter is tied to a geographic area so that members can easily get together once a month. The smaller chapters are where clusters of houses are just getting started. Once an area is developed, the number of houses in a Chapter will grow. When the number reaches 12, the Chapter can subdivide into two chapters to keep the size of the group manageable.

## Low Cost

When Oxford House first began in 1990 in Washington, the state opted to develop Oxford Houses rather than building an expensive network of halfway houses to fill the need for recovery housing in the state. In 1982 – a national high water mark for traditional halfway houses – The National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse [NIAAA] had a study done that identified about 280 halfway houses throughout the country.<sup>6</sup>

The state's decision has led to a statewide network of 212 Oxford Houses providing over 1,700 recovery beds. A comparable number of recovery beds based on the traditional halfway house model would cost the state about \$87 million a year. State funding of OHI to establish and monitor Washington's statewide network of Oxford Houses is about \$450,000 a year – less than 1% of the cost for comparable recovery beds using a traditional halfway house model.<sup>7</sup>

The reason the taxpayer cost is so low is that the residents of each Oxford House operate it themselves and pay all household expenses, including rental payments to the landlord. This represents a substantial cost to residents – but not to taxpayers. For example, in 2009, Washington Oxford House residents used their own funds to pay household expenses of about \$7,713,000. Each of the residents pays an equal share of household expenses [usually rent to the landlord, start-up loan repayment, cable TV, utilities and household staples]. In 2009, in Washington, that equal share of weekly household expenses averaged \$85 a week with a range of \$75 to \$130 per week.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In the NIAAA study the 1982 annual average cost per halfway house bed was \$23,000.

<sup>7</sup> \$87,000,000 times .0046 = \$400,200 or .46% of the cost of an equal number of traditional halfway house beds.

<sup>8</sup> Most Washington State Oxford Houses collect equal share of expenses on a monthly basis. We have converted the monthly rate to a weekly rate which is how most

## Effective Replication

Each individual Oxford House is a rented house and is chartered by OHI. The chartering procedure is a two-step process: (1) the issuance of a temporary charter, and [2] the issuance of a permanent charter, once the requirements of the temporary charter is met. Both the temporary and permanent charters have three simple conditions that the group requesting a charter must meet in order to call itself an Oxford House™. Usually a new house is able to demonstrate it understands the system of operation sufficiently to receive a permanent charter within a period of about six months. The three conditions of both the conditional and permanent charter are as follows:

- The group must be democratically self-run,
- The group must be financially self-supporting, and
- The group must immediately expel any resident who returns to using alcohol or drugs.

These three basic requirements – democracy, self-support and absolute sobriety – lie at the heart of what makes an Oxford House work. The requirement that the group be democratically self-run has both practical and therapeutic value. The residents in an Oxford House save money by managing their house themselves rather than paying employees to “look after them.” That is the practical aspect. But also, in managing the operation of their house, the residents gain self-esteem, accountability and civic responsibility.

The requirement of self-support also has both practical and therapeutic value. As noted above, each Washington Oxford House resident pays an average of \$85 a week into their group household account as their equal share of household

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houses in other states compute their weekly share of expenses. Nationally the weekly share of expenses is a little more than \$100 a week.

expenses. More importantly, when the residents of an individual house pay their monthly bills each resident in the group gains the satisfaction of having behaved responsibly. This is new behavior for most recovering addicts.

The satisfaction that comes from the group paying bills strengthens the cohesiveness of the group as a whole and increases the value of individual sobriety. This is particularly true because each resident in each Oxford House knows firsthand that the success or failure of the individual house depends upon following the disciplined democratic system of operation that is a basic tenant of every Oxford House – including paying household bills on time.

### Good Outcomes

NIAAA and the National Institute of Drug Addiction [NIDA] have funded a number of studies of Oxford Houses. Those agencies provided funding to DePaul University in Chicago to conduct a number of national studies related to the efficacy of Oxford House.<sup>9</sup>

The studies consist of a number of specific small-scale studies and two major studies. One of the small-scale studies examined optimism, abstinence self-efficacy and self-mastery of two groups of individuals in early recovery experience. One group lived in an Oxford House and attended 12-Step self-help recovery meetings. The other group also went to 12-step self-help recovery meetings [AA and NA] but did not live in an Oxford House. Both groups were interviewed initially to determine basic history [demographic and treatment history] and the individuals completed questionnaires related to the cognitive resources of optimism, abstinence, self-efficacy and self-mastery. Follow-up interviews were held every three months for a year.

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<sup>9</sup> Thirteen of the DePaul specific studies have been published in book form: *Creating Communities for Addiction Recovery: The Oxford House Model*, edited by Leonard A. Jason, Joseph R. Ferrari, Margaret I. Davis, Bradley D. Olson, The Hayworth Press, New York, 2006

The authors concluded their study as follows:

Overall findings suggest that cognitive resources facilitate substance abusers' recovery and that the Oxford House model provides recovering substance abusers with an environment that provides greater support in their development of cognitive resourcefulness for ongoing abstinence.<sup>10</sup>

In a major study financed by NIDA, the DePaul researchers followed 897 Oxford House residents living in 219 Oxford House around the country [including a number of houses in Washington] for a period of 27 months to determine how many stayed clean and sober without relapse.<sup>11</sup> Their findings were that after 27 months a remarkable 87% had stayed clean and sober for the entire period of time.

In another study funded by NIAAA, the DePaul researchers randomly selected one-half of a group of 150 recovering individuals leaving treatment in Illinois to enter Oxford House and compared their outcomes over a two-year period with a control group whose members lived wherever their normal habitant was following treatment. On its face, the findings were also remarkable – 65% of the Oxford House group stayed clean and sober without relapse for the two-year period and only 31% of the control group had the same outcome. The result might have been worse for the control group had not 8 [10%] of its members voluntarily choose Oxford House living. All eight stayed clean and sober.

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<sup>10</sup> John M. Majer, Leonard A. Jason, Bradley D. Olson, *Optimism, Abstinence Self-Efficacy, and Self-Mastery – A Comparative Analysis of Cognitive Resources*, Assessment, Volume 11, No.1, March 2004, 57-63 at P. 62.

<sup>11</sup> To be in this study the individual had to be an existing resident of an Oxford House. All study subjects were followed for a full 27-month period even after he or she moved out of an Oxford House. The self-reporting of the study subjects every three months was cross-checked by getting confirmation from a friend designated by the subject at the beginning of the study.

## Relapse Rate in WA Oxford Houses

One advantage of modern technology is that data can be collected and analyzed easily, accurately and quickly. Oxford House relies on documentation to evaluate the effectiveness of Oxford House living. Each Oxford House secretary checks into the Oxford House website once a week to post vacancies and to report departures, applications and acceptances. Table 2 below shows house activity during the last six month's of 2009.

**Table 2**  
**Turnover During Last Six Months of 2009**

Month	Applications	Admissions	Number Leaving House		
			Sober	Relapse	Other
Jul.	420	179	79	67	41
Aug.	444	200	92	68	38
Sep.	446	221	101	58	32
Oct.	409	197	95	65	35
Nov.	382	183	95	51	32
Dec.	389	203	88	51	33
Total	2101	1183	550	360	211

The 20.8% relapse rate is based on the number of individuals asked to leave an Oxford House during the period. About 53% of applicants were admitted to Washington State Oxford Houses. Experience has shown that because there is no time limit on length of residency in an Oxford House those who do not relapse tend to stay until they feel comfortable enough in sobriety to avoid relapse. While Oxford House does not scientifically “follow” residents once they have moved out of an Oxford House, a number of academic studies have done so. In one study by the DePaul University Community Research Group, 897 residents in 219 Oxford Houses around the country were monitored for 27 months. The research findings, reported to the 2005 American Psychological Association, found that for the 27 month period only 13% relapsed.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See the discussion of the DePaul studies earlier in this report and the study and Associated Press reporting of the findings are on the Oxford House website under “Publications/DePaul.” Both the Journal Report of the study and the AP news release can be downloaded from the website.

The unique feature of Oxford House is that a member of an Oxford House can live there until he or she feels comfortable enough in sobriety to avoid relapse. Since every individual becomes comfortable in sobriety at a different pace, the open-ended residency of an Oxford House is important. The average stay in a Washington State Oxford House is about 15 months but some individuals will stay forever. In the Washington State survey, one resident had more than 15 years sobriety. However, 35% of the residents who live in Washington State Oxford Houses have less than six months sobriety.

The average length of sobriety among Washington State Oxford House residents [17.8 months] is influenced by the fact that most relapses occur during the first to sixth month of residency. The 80% who do not relapse accumulated long-term sobriety. The longer the sobriety, the more likely it will last a lifetime.<sup>13</sup>



### Oxford House Towanda

2009 Whatcom Street  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
An Oxford House for nine women  
Established April 1,1997

No significant differences appear in the survey responses of men and women. Recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction is a process of developing behavior centered around sobriety that works equally well for women or men.

<sup>13</sup> This is consistent with the findings from the DePaul studies downloadable from the website.

## Survey Results

Of 1,248 residents presented the survey questionnaire in 2009, 948 [76%] completed it. The questionnaire has been used by OHI since 1987. It presents a snapshot profile of individuals living in Oxford Houses. A slightly greater percentage of women Oxford House residents completed the survey than men. The actual percentage of statewide Oxford House beds for women is 29% but 34% of the respondents to the questionnaires are women.

**Table 3**  
**Gender of Respondents**

	Number	Percent
Male	628	66.2
Female	320	33.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The average age of the residents in the Washington State Oxford Houses is 37.7 years. Table 4 shows the distribution by age groups.

**Table 4**  
**Age Group**

Age	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-22	13	4.7	4.7
23-27	18	6.5	11.2
28-32	26	9.4	20.6
33-37	23	8.3	28.9
38-42	50	18.1	46.9
43-47	59	21.3	68.2
48-52	49	17.7	85.9
53-57	28	10.1	96.0
58-62	9	3.2	99.3
<u>63-67</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>.7</u>	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

About 20% of the residents in the network of Washington State Oxford Houses are addicted only to alcohol and 80 percent are addicted to both alcohol and other addictive drugs. This is consistent with finding in other Oxford Houses throughout the country.

The costs of alcoholism and drug addiction include marital status.

**Table 5**  
**Marital Status**

	Number	Percent
Never Married	503	53.5
Married	44	4.7
Separated	74	7.9
Divorced	313	33.3
<u>Widowed</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>.6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in Table 5, only about 5% of the Oxford House residents are currently married. Over half have never been married and over 40% are divorced or separated. Alcoholism and drug addiction tend to take a toll on marriage.

Alcoholics and drug addicts come from all races, educational backgrounds and economic status. Table 6 shows the self-described racial status.

**Table 6**  
**Self-Reported Race**

	Number	Percent
White	811	86.2
Black	32	3.4
Hispanic	24	2.6
Asian	10	1.1
Native American	41	4.4
Pacific Islander	8	.9
<u>Other</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>1.6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The 2000 United States Census breaks down racial composition for Washington as follows: White 81.8%; Black 3.2%; Asian 5.5%; 4% Hawaiian, 1.6% American Indian and Other 7.5%. While those categories equal 100%, Census also indicates that 7.5% are of Hispanic origin, which overlaps with the other categories. The distribution of races within the Washington Network of Oxford Houses is about the same as the distribution of race within the state.

In both the state and throughout the United States, Oxford House has never had problems within the houses arising because of race. While there is not much good that can be claimed for addiction to alcohol and drugs, both are color-blind. Within the context of recovery, the

common ground of seeking sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse is strong enough to set aside prejudice based on race or class.

The educational attainment level of the Washington Oxford House resident averages 12.4 years with a spread from less than grade 8 to graduate degrees. Several interesting facts arise from educational attainment findings. The first is that 3.3% of the residents [N 31] have not graduated from the eighth grade. More research will be conducted to identify more characteristics about this group. It is too often taken as a matter of course that everyone stays in school until at least through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Twenty-one percent of the survey respondents [N-205] have not graduated from high school. We know that some will work toward getting a GED once sober but we do not know how many. At the other end of the educational attainment spectrum are those 5% who have college post-graduate degrees [N-49] and another 2% have post-graduate degrees [N-17].

This mix of individuals living in Oxford Houses based on educational attainment seems to benefit both the well educated and the less educated. While no studies have been conducted measuring this effect in the Washington Network of Oxford Houses, observations in several jurisdictions have found that the educated help the under-educated to get back into formal education programs. The assumption among Oxford House residents is that addiction played a role in all aspects of their life including educational attainment.

In Washington State individuals early in recovery can get financial assistance to move into an Oxford House. As discussed previously, all the household expenses within an Oxford House – including the rent the group pays the landlord – is shared equally among the residents. While the weekly expense is relatively small – about \$85 – it nevertheless requires that most individuals get a job to pay their equal share of expenses. Washington State Oxford House residents have a benefit – or disadvantage, depending on one’s

perspective – of getting a subsidy for the first several month’s of Oxford House living. If one considers all residents of Washington State Oxford Houses in determining the average monthly income, the average is around \$1,100.

Because residents can obtain government assistance to pay their equal share of household expenses during their initial months at an Oxford House the number of “unemployed” is higher than in other states [47% versus 10% or less among residents in other states]. Generally, an individual must immediately get a job in order to pay that expense. Therefore, it is relevant in Washington to provide separate income statistics for employed and unemployed residents. Those who were still unemployed [but looking for work] constituted 47% [N-460] and had an average income of \$531 a month. Those employed, 53% [N-519] reported an average monthly income of \$1,792 [median \$1,500].

The subsidy has both pluses and minuses. The greatest benefit is that it permits individuals to move into an Oxford House who otherwise might not be able to because they lack the money to pay an equal share of expenses. The minus is that it may slow down efforts to secure employment.

**Table 7  
Last Lived**

<i>Prior Living Place</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Apartment	213	23.0	23.0
Owned House	81	08.7	31.7
Rented House	147	15.9	47.6
Rented Room	144	15.5	63.1
Jail	114	12.3	75.4
VA Hospital	4	00.4	75.8
Halfway-House	21	02.3	78.1
Homeless	203	21.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Almost everyone comes into an Oxford House immediately following detoxification, jail or treatment of some sort, although a few will apply to an Oxford House after some event has affected their life– moving, job change or death of a loved one. A better measure of what living

alternative a person would have is to ask where he or she lived just prior to last treatment. Table 7 [above] shows the responses. If one considers the top three categories – owned house, apartment and rented house – as representative of some stability then about half the residents fell into that category – 48%. More than half fell into categories reflecting living on the edge: 12% came from jail or prison and 22% were homeless just prior to their last treatment.

Overall, 70% of the Oxford House residents reported that they had been homeless sometime during their addiction and the average time of homelessness was a substantial 9 months. The average number of times such persons had been homeless was 2.2 times. Having an Oxford House to live in becomes an important factor in staying sober.



Oxford House-Whipple in Spokane Valley is a house for ten men that was established in 2007.

Another living environment for which Oxford House living improves the odds of successfully staying clean and sober is jail or prison. More than 80% of the respondents have done jail time. The average number of times residents reported being arrested while using was 5.8. When an alcoholic and/or drug addict leaves incarceration, typically he or she soon returns to using. Shortly thereafter a crime will be committed either because of violence triggered by intoxication or to get money to buy drugs. The individual then continues a pattern of recycling in and out of court, jail or treatment. Living in the clean and sober Oxford House with its disciplined democratic self-rule and self-support stops relapses and recycling in and out of addic-

tion. The recycling phenomenon is not limited just to those who commit crimes. Overall the norm is repeated treatment episodes. The TEDS data shows that individuals in specialty residential treatment have been through treatment an average of three times before the current treatment episode. Table 8 shows the number of times survey respondents had been through residential treatment.

**Table 8**  
**Times in Residential Treatment**

	Number	Percent
Never	165	18.0
Once	300	32.8
Twice	170	18.6
3-5 times	216	23.5
6-10 times	55	6.0
More than 10 times	12	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The recycling not only suggests that the normal treatment protocol falls short in developing long-term sobriety without relapse but also shows that health care costs are much higher than they have to be. Expansion of the number of Oxford House with good distribution throughout the country would help reduce the costs of recycling. Washington State development of Oxford Houses throughout the state has provided a significant opportunity for recovering addicts to stay clean and sober without relapse even though there are more than two applicants for each vacant bed in the network of houses.

The Oxford Houses are distributed throughout the state from Seattle to Spokane because OHI has been able to manage outreach workers to develop houses and organize twenty-seven mutually supportive chapters.

When the first Oxford House in the state – Oxford House-Chalet I –was established by long-distance telephone calls between the landlord, the first few residents and Oxford House central office in Silver Spring, and it quickly became clear that on-site representation of an experienced Oxford House resident was essential to

statewide development. Mark Spence, an Oxford House resident in Washington, D.C. was sent to the state early in 1990. He soon met Myrna Brown, a resident in Oxford House-Chalet, and together they began the development process. Among other houses that Mark rented was Oxford House-Edmonds. That house would play a substantial role in the expansion of Oxford House both in and outside the state. Not only was the house the subject of landmark litigation related to the not-in-my-back yard [NIMBY] issue but it also became home to two individuals who would become in-state outreach workers – Tom Dugan and Gino Pugliese.<sup>14</sup> Myrna Brown and Tom Dugan, both as direct OHI employees and then state consultants demonstrated the value of having experienced residents help expand the number of houses by renting a suitable house, recruiting residents and teaching them the system of operations. The utilization of trained outreach workers not only keeps houses on track but also permits the kind of geographic distribution that has taken place in Washington.

### Veterans

Almost 14% [N-135] of the Washington residents in the survey are military veterans – primarily from the Vietnam conflict but some from more recent conflicts. Nationally about 18% of Oxford House residents are military veterans. The veterans provide a valuable asset to Oxford House because they tend to understand the system of disciplined democratic operation and offer leadership to the program. However, Oxford House also serves the veterans well. Recently, OHI submitted a proposal to the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs to receive a grant to provide outreach workers that focus on

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<sup>14</sup> Myrna Brown and Tom Dugan were the initial in-state outreach workers in the state. Currently, Gino Pugliese, Judy Maxwell, Marty Selvidge, Stacie Anderson, Ricky Mogel and Blake Bippes are outreach workers in the state. Gino is a graduate of Oxford House-Edmonds and the other five are also Washington State Oxford House alumni.

reaching out to homeless veterans. The current Administration has a goal of ending homelessness among veterans in five years. Since a high percentage of homeless vets are suffering from alcoholism and drug addiction, Oxford House can provide an effective path to sobriety comfortable enough sobriety to avoid relapse. The DePaul University Community Research Team has already begun research and evaluation of how veterans with co-occurring mental illness do in an Oxford House setting. Experience and early research findings suggest that most residents with co-occurring mental illness do just fine.

Where a co-occurring disorder such as bi-polar disorder can be successfully managed by the use of medication, the individual living in an Oxford House develops behavior whereby taking the right amount of medication becomes an ingrained habit because of the time and peer support afforded by Oxford House living. Several peer-reviewed articles in are showing that veterans are doing well in the Oxford House setting irrespective of co-occurring disorders.<sup>15</sup>

### Resident's View of Oxford House

Objective results depend upon looking at outcomes and determining who is clean and sober

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<sup>15</sup> More than 100 peer-reviewed articles have been published by the DePaul Research Team and the list of those publications can be download from the Oxford House website by going to "About Us/Resources." A study concerning co-occurring mental illness and Oxford House can be downloaded from the website under "Publications/Evaluation/DePaul." One article, *A Longitudinal Analysis of Psychiatric Severity upon Outcomes Among Substance Abusers Residing in Self-Help Settings* directly relates to how well residents with co-occurring disorders do in an Oxford House. Researchers in this study tested 897 Oxford House residents [604 men /293 women] using *Addiction Severity Index* and calculated the *Psychiatric Severity Index* [PSI] to identify residents with moderate or severe co-occurring disorders. The results showed that both those with severe and moderate PSI indications did well in staying clean and sober, avoiding hospitalization and functioning well over time. Subsequent research is showing that even veterans with PTSD and addiction do well in an Oxford House.

and staying that way. Oxford House promotes the independent third-party research to evaluate the program objectively. However, it also relies on what people who are living in Oxford House think about it. Table 9 below shows how residents responded to the question “Would you recommend Oxford House living to someone else?”

**Table 9**  
**Would You Recommend OH?**

	Number	Percent
No	1	.1
Yes	928	98.1
<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>1.8</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Another measure to determine how residents valued Oxford House is to ask how important is Oxford House to the recovery of the resident. Table 10 shows the responses.

**Table 10**  
**Importance of OH to Sobriety**

	Number	Percent
Very Important	821	86.9
Moderately Important	56	5.9
Somewhat important	31	3.3
Not Really Sure	18	1.9
<u>Insignificant</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>2.0</u>

A substantial majority felt Oxford House was “very important” to maintenance of their personal sobriety. Of course, part of the Oxford House culture involves doing more to assure sobriety than just living in an Oxford House. Residents in Washington Oxford Houses go to an average 3.9 AA/NA meetings a week. AA surveys show that the average member goes to only 2 meetings a week. Moreover, in addition to regular attendance at 12-Step meetings, 42.7% of the residents also went to weekly session with a counselor. This kind of focus on recovery might not have happened but for the recovery culture that is part of an Oxford House.

Any alcoholic or drug addict with years of comfortable sobriety will acknowledge that many things contributed to his or her recovery. Oxford House provides a recovering person a safe

haven for recovery to take hold.

Finally, residents were asked to evaluate their present health. The residents were whether they personally felt their health was very good, pretty good, not so good or quite poor. Most felt their health was very good or pretty good. Table 11 shows the responses.

**Table 11**  
**Health [Self-Reported]**

	Number	Percent
Very Good	231	24.5
Pretty Good	601	63.9
Not So Good	102	10.8
Quite Poor	7	.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Each year at the Oxford House convention the closing session remembers those resident and alumni who died during the preceding year. As the network of Oxford Houses has grown to over 1,400 nationally, the list of residents who die each year from natural causes grows too.

### Conclusion

The Network of Oxford Houses in Washington State is second to none – both in quantity and quality. Each year nearly 4,000 individuals live in the 212 houses throughout the state. Over three-quarters of them will stay clean and sober without relapse. The transformation of their lives has taken place because of many different factors but a common factor to all has been the time, peer support and life experiences they have enjoyed as members of Oxford House.

The Oxford House Washington State Association keeps alumni and current residents in touch and developed a slogan – “Oxford House – A New Way of Living”– that sums up what recovery is all about.

The following page lists the treatment facilities that the current residents attended prior to living in Oxford House. At every step along the way behavior to learn sobriety comfortable enough to prevent relapse have been gained.

<b>Rehabilitation Center</b>	<b>#</b>				
		jail	1	RCKC	4
ABHS	48	James Oldham	15	Residence XII	9
ADATSA	1	JRC	1	Right Choice	1
Adept Treatment Center	1	Kaiser	2	Right Living	1
Adventist Medical Center	1	Kennewick	1	River's Edge Hospital-Illinois	1
Advocates for Wellness	2	Kitsap Recovery Center	43	Riverton Place	4
Agape Unlimited	3	Klallam Counseling	4	Rogue Center	1
Airway Heights Corrections	1	La Hacienda Treatment--TX	1	Ruhleben, Germany	1
Allvest House North	1	Lake Chelan	1	Ryther	1
Alternative	2	Lakeside Milam	111	Salvation Army-ARC	24
Alternatives LDP	1	Larch Correctional	1	Salvation Army-Seattle	1
American Lake	2	Legacy	3	Sea Mar	3
Astoria Point	1	Lifeline Connections	91	Seadrunar	14
B.H.R.	4	Lourdes MICA	2	Serenity Counseling Services	1
Bi Corp	2	McKinley House	1	Seventh Day Adventist-Portland	1
Cascade Treatment-Silverdale	1	Merit	2	Shifa	1
Casida Del Rio	2	MICCA	1	Skyland Ranch	1
Catholic Community Services	1	Mom's Recovery Center	1	Sober College	1
CDAC	1	Naval Station-Bremerton	1	Sound Mental Health	2
Cedar Creek	2	NE Washington Treatment	1	SPARC	20
Cedar Hills Treatment Center	3	New Horizons	3	Spokane	1
Christian Ranch	1	New Life Program	1	Square One	1
Circle Recovery	1	North Star Clinic	1	St. Joseph's	5
Civigenics	10	Northstar-Bend	1	St. Peter's	16
Clallam Counsel	1	Northwest Indian Treatment	1	Stafford Creek Corrections	1
Columbia Treatment	1	Northwest Recovery	6	STEPS	1
Community Health Services	1	NW Indian Treatment	1	Sun Ray Court	21
Compus Health	1	Olalla	25	Sundown M Ranch	73
Covenant	1	Pacific View	1	Tacoma Rescue Mission	1
Cowlitz	1	Paradise Recovery	1	Tamarack Youth Center	1
Cowlitz Tribal Treatment	1	PARC	2	The Center	19
CRCC Legacy	1	Parker Valley Hope	1	The Refuge-Fla	1
Creative Care	1	Partners with Families and Children	1	THS	1
DAPC	22	Passages to Recovery	1	Thunderbird	9
Day One	2	Prenatal Treatment Center	4	Tigard Recovery Center	1
Deaf Addiction Center	6	Phoenix	1	Trillium	1
DOC	32	Pinelodge	1	Turning Point	1
ECWR	1	Pioneer	33	Union Gospel Mission	5
Edgewood	3	PLLLW TC	1	VA	9
Evergreen	1	PLPR	1	VA-Vancouver	1
Evergreen Manor	3	Polk County	1	VA-Walla Walla	1
First Step	3	Pride	1	Valley General	4
Foothills	1	Prosperity	24	WCC-Shelton	2
Genesis House	6	Providence	1	WCCW-DOC	1
Group Health DRU	2	Providence Addictions Recovery	2	West Sound Treatment	1
Harbor Crest	1	Providence St. Peters CDC	1	Westcoast Counseling	1
Highland Courte	11	Puyallup Tribal	8	WINR-Mesa, AZ	1
Highline Recovery	5	PWR	1	Women's Way-Salvation Army	1
Integrity--Larch Mountain DOC	1	R X11	1	YFA	1
IOP-DOC	1	Ranch	1	YFA Connections	1
Isabella House	1	Rancho L'Abri	1		
				<b>Total # Originations:</b>	<b>891</b>

## OXFORD HOUSE TRADITIONS

1. Oxford House has as its primary goal the provision of housing for the alcoholic and drug addict who wants to stay clean and sober.
2. All Oxford Houses are run on a democratic basis. Our officers serve continuous periods of no longer than six months.
3. No Member of an Oxford House is ever asked to leave without cause -- drinking, drug use, or disruptive behavior.
4. Oxford House members realize that active participation in AA and/or NA offers assurance of continued sobriety.
5. Each Oxford House should be autonomous except in matters affecting other houses or Oxford House, Inc. - as a whole.
6. Each Oxford House should be financially self-supporting.
7. Oxford House should remain forever non-professional.
8. Propagation of the Oxford House, Inc. concept should always be conceived as public education.
9. Members who leave an Oxford House in good standing should become associate members.



# Oxford House™

1975-2010

*35 Years of Organized Self-Help To Enable Alcoholics and Drug Addicts  
to Recover Without Relapse*

- Providing Sole Authority for Oxford House Charters
- Providing Technical Assistance to Establish New Oxford Houses
- Providing Technical Assistance to Keep Existing Oxford Houses on Track
- Providing Organization of Chapters to Help Houses Help Themselves
- Providing the Time, Living Environment and Support to Enable Alcoholics and Drug Addicts to Achieve Recovery Without Relapse
- Providing the Legal, Philosophical, and Scientific Framework for a Cost-effective, Worldwide Network of Supportive Recovery Housing.

Write or Call

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