



## Assessing Readiness for Supportive Housing Development Activities

Organizations that have decided to pursue the development of new supportive housing units, and that are determining the right role for their organization in that development process, should start with a careful assessment and analysis of their capacity to successfully engage in such activities. This document highlights some of the key questions that an organization, whether primarily a social service agency or primarily a housing development agency, should consider as part of that capacity analysis.

### **IF YOU'RE PRIMARILY A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY:**

- Answer the following questions with Yes or No.
- If you answer No to any of these questions, consider whether you can you take steps to turn the No into a Yes?
- If not, can your organization adequately mitigate the issues or limitations involved?
- If such mitigation is not possible, it is important to consider further the implications for the type of role your agency should play in the development and operation phases of supportive housing.

### ***Questions Regarding the Development Phase:***

As an organization, do you have the staffing, interest, funding support, time and related skills to:

- Directly coordinate the development process as the owner's project manager?  
 Yes                       No
- Oversee and direct the work of a development consultant?  
 Yes                       No
- Actively participate in a joint venture in which the other partner takes much of the responsibility for developing the project?  
 Yes                       No

Also, consider your future plans:

- Are you likely to do multiple development projects?  
 Yes                       No
- If yes, is it feasible and consistent with your strategic plan to raise funds and hire a new staff person to oversee or develop the planned supportive housing projects?  
 Yes                       No

Note: This document is included within the *Development and Finance* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at [www.csh.org/toolkit](http://www.csh.org/toolkit). This document has been adapted from CSH's publication *Not a Solo Act*, which is available at [www.csh.org/publications](http://www.csh.org/publications).

**Questions Regarding the Operations Phase:**

As an organization, do you have the staffing, interest, funding support, time and related skills to:

- Serve as the owner’s representative, oversee property management and services, and provide asset management services?  
 Yes                       No
  
- To directly perform property management functions, including rent collection, evictions, rule enforcement, accounting, maintenance and janitorial services?  
 Yes                       No
  
- If no, are you prepared to carefully evaluate the organizational and financial feasibility of self-management, convince lenders that this is the optimal solution, and implement the necessary training and staff support to be successful as self-managers?  
 Yes                       No

As an organization, do you have a staff person, or can the project financially support a new appropriate staff person, to:

- Plan for needed services during the development phase?  
 Yes                       No
  
- Coordinate the needed services?  
 Yes                       No
  
- Directly provide needed support services?  
 Yes                       No

**IF YOU'RE PRIMARILY A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AGENCY:**

- Answer the following questions with Yes or No.
- If you answer No to any of these questions, consider whether you can you take steps to turn the No into a Yes?
- If not, can your organization adequately mitigate the issues or limitations involved?
- If such mitigation is not possible, it is important to consider further the implications for structuring the partnerships needed in developing supportive housing; and/or if this is the right kind of development activity for your organization.

**Questions Regarding the Development Phase:**

As an organization, do you have the staffing, interest, funding support, time and related skills to:

- Actively collaborate and/or contract with a service provider during development planning and fundraising?  
 Yes                       No
- Actively participate in a joint venture with a service provider, where your agency is primarily responsible for development, but consults extensively with your service provider partner?  
 Yes                       No

Also consider your future plans:

- Are you likely to do multiple supportive housing development projects?  
 Yes                       No
- If yes, is it feasible and consistent with your strategic plan to raise funds and hire a new staff person to plan support services for projects?  
 Yes                       No

**Questions Regarding the Operations Phase:**

Do you have the experience and commitment to learn to:

- Understand the role of supportive services in building operations?  
 Yes                       No
- Ensure that social service providers are seen as peers of management staff?  
 Yes                       No

- Work with social service providers to find continuing funding for services?  
 Yes                       No
  
- Are you prepared to invest more time in management and services oversight in this project than in other types of projects?  
 Yes                       No
  
- Do you have a staff person or can the project financially support a new appropriate staff person to:
  - Plan for needed services during the development phase?  
 Yes                       No
  
  - Coordinate the needed services?  
 Yes                       No
  
  - Directly provide needed support services?  
 Yes                       No
  
- Do you have a staff person with the interest, funding support, time and related skills to directly perform property management functions, including rent collection, evictions, rule enforcement, accounting, maintenance and janitorial services?  
 Yes                       No
  
- If no, are you prepared to carefully evaluate the organizational and financial feasibility of self-management, convince lenders that this is the optimal solution, and implement the necessary training and staff support to be successful as self-managers?  
 Yes                       No

Note: Additional tools in CSH's *Toolkit for the Development and Operation of Supportive Housing* may prove useful to organizations assessing their capacity to engage in supportive housing development activities. See tools under *Assessing Capacity* within the *Development and Finance* section of the Toolkit, available at [www.csh.org/toolkit2/development](http://www.csh.org/toolkit2/development).