

Question and Answers

Q. What is an Oxford House? Oxford House is a self-run, self-supported recovery house program for individuals recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction. Oxford Houses assure an alcohol and drug-free living environment. The first Oxford House was started in Silver Spring, Maryland in 1975.

Q. Who manages an Oxford House?

Oxford Houses are democratically self-run by the residents who elect officers to serve for terms of six months. In this respect, they are similar to a college fraternity or sorority. However, if a majority of residents believe that any member has relapsed into using alcohol or drugs, that person is immediately expelled. There are no resident counselors in an Oxford House.

Q. How can one get into an Oxford House?

You apply directly to the house.

Any recovering alcoholic or drug addict can apply to get into any Oxford House by filling out an application and being interviewed by the existing members of the House. The application is then considered by the membership of the House and if there is a vacancy and if 80% of the members approve, the applicant is accepted and moves in.

Q. What if there is not an Oxford House in the area or there are no vacancies in any Oxford House in the region?

Any Group of recovering individuals can start a new Oxford House. All they need to do is to find a house to rent in the name of the Group, and apply to Oxford House, Inc., for a charter.

Q. Can both men and women live in the same Oxford House?

No. Experience has shown that Oxford Houses work for both men and women, but not in the same house.

Q. What is the "ideal" number of individuals to make a self-run, self-supported recovery house work?

Experience of Oxford House has shown that from 8 to 10 member's works very well. A house with fewer than six individuals is difficult to maintain because of the small size of the group and the fact that any vacancy causes a greater disruption of the financial welfare of the house. A house must have six or more residents in order to be recognized or chartered by Oxford House.

Q. How much sobriety or clean time is needed before an individual can be accepted into an Oxford House?

There is no time limit. Generally, an individual comes into an Oxford House following a 28-day rehabilitation program or at least a 10-day detoxification program.

History and Accomplishments

1975 through 1988

The first Oxford House was established in 1975 in Silver Spring, Maryland. In the years between 1975 and 1988, eighteen Houses were set up for recovering individuals. The principles of replication and guidelines for running a group home for recovering alcoholics and substance abusers embodied in the Oxford House Manual had become institutionalized in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area.

1988: The Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act

In 1988, Congress enacted P.L. 100-690, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. This Act includes a provision requiring all states to establish a revolving loan fund to provide start-up funds for groups wishing to open sober living environments based on the Oxford House model. These loans pay the first month's rent and Entry Fee and thereby accelerate the rate at which individual recovering people can find affordable housing.

1989: The Outreach Operation and Central Office

Could the Oxford House concept, native to the District of Columbia, provide a valid model to groups thousand of miles distant? Would the Board of Directors of Oxford House, whose task is to ensure that the traditions and good name of Oxford House be maintained, keep track of the viability of Houses from Maine to Hawaii?

The answer lay in the foundation of the Oxford House Financial and Outreach Services Operation. Since 1989, Oxford House Services has been funded by a combination of public and private foundation grants and service contracts with individual states. Services staff participate in opening new Houses in new areas and in monitoring the adherence of member Houses to the traditions of Oxford House.

The efforts of the Field Staff are supplemented by the Central Office, which interacts with all Houses on a regular basis, records and reports problems, and assists in resolving zoning questions. The Financial Services Office administers loans to Houses and tabulates data from the Houses.

1989 through 1996

Using the Outreach Operation, the accomplishments of Oxford House in five years include:

- Houses increased from 18 to over 600.
- States served increased from 3 to 41.
- Total recovery beds increased from 145 to over 5,000.
- Women's Houses increased from 3 to 110.
- Women's Houses that accept women with children increased from 1 to 18.
- Communities served increased from 3 to 253.

Average rate of relapse maintained at less than 20% of all residents.

1996 through 2019

- As of January 2019 there are 260 houses in North Carolina, with locations in 28 cities. With an average of 9 beds per house, there are more than 2,000 beds in the state.
- State Association formed, to centralized communication among houses.
- Annual World and State Conventions.

What are the benefits of living in an Oxford House?

While living in an Oxford House you will:

- Receive 24-hour support from peers in recovery.
- Learn skills for living in recovery.
- Share responsibility for maintaining the house.
- Learn to manage a household.
- Vote on all issues affecting the house.
- Elect house officers who equally guide decisions for maintaining the home.
- Receive guidelines and training to successfully maintain the house.
- Have opportunities to make new friends for enjoying positive activities with.

How successful are Oxford Houses in helping people maintain recovery?

- Research shows that Oxford Houses have an 80 percent success rate nationally (people maintaining recovery for 18 month or longer).
- A study covering a 27-month follow-up of 890 Individuals found that only 13% relapsed (Leonard, Davis, Ferrari-2007).
- Without a recovery house, half of the people who begin recovery will relapse.
- This cost-effective way to support ongoing recovery shows communities that treatment works and people in recovery can be model citizens.
- Oxford House research reports are available online at: www.oxfordhouse.org

What do my costs cover?

- Equal expense shares in a fully furnished home
- Utilities, including telephone and TV
- Basic food staples
- Housekeeping/cleaning supplies

The Oxford House Model

All Oxford Houses have in common these characteristics:

- The House must be democratically self-run.
- The House membership is responsible for all household expenses.
- The House must immediately expel any member who uses alcohol or drugs. Which each house must fulfill in order to obtain and retain its Oxford House Charter.

Oxford House is a concept in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. In its simplest form, an Oxford House describes a democratically run, self-supporting and drug free home. Parallel to this concept lies the organizational structure of Oxford House, Inc. This publicly supported, non-profit 501(c)3 corporation is the umbrella organization which provides the network connecting all Oxford Houses and allocates resources to duplicate the Oxford House concept where needs arise.

The number of residents in a House may range from six to fifteen; there are houses for men, houses for women, and houses that accept women with children. Oxford Houses flourish in metropolitan areas, such as New York City and Washington D.C. and thrive in such diverse communities, as Hawaii, Washington State, Canada and Australia; but they all abide by the basic criteria. Each House represents a remarkably effective and low cost method of preventing relapse. This was the purpose of the first Oxford House established in 1975, and this purpose is served, day-by-day, house after house, in each of over 1,600 houses in the United States today.

The Oxford House Network: A Self-Run Structure

Three or more Oxford Houses within a 100-mile radius comprise an Oxford House Chapter. A representative of each House in the Chapter meets with the others on a monthly basis, to exchange information, to seek resolution problems in a particular House, and to express that Chapter's vote on larger issues.

The World Council is comprised of 12 members, 9 of which presently live in an Oxford House, 3 who are alumni. Members are elected each year at the Oxford House World Convention. The primary mission of the Oxford House World Council is to facilitate adherence to Oxford House Traditions' concept and system of operations, by providing effective means of communication and mission focus between the various organizational structures of Oxford House as a whole. In carrying out its mission the Council always keeps a focus on expansion of the network of individual Oxford Houses, to provide all recovering alcoholics and drug addictions the opportunity to develop comfortable sobriety without relapse.

The Board of Directors maintains the sole right to Charter and revoke the Charter of individual Oxford Houses and exercises authority over the policies and officers of Oxford House, Inc. In this way, Oxford House, Inc. remains responsive to the needs of the population it serves.

Mission Statement

Oxford House, Inc., a service organization that serves as the umbrella organization for the worldwide network of Oxford Houses, is dedicated to establishing and maintaining disciplined self-help housing that supports long-term recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction and co-occurring

How Oxford Houses Work

The standardized disciplined system of operations has evolved from the 39-year history of Oxford House and permits replication of Oxford Houses throughout the country. All Oxford Houses are tied together to assure mutual support and quality control.

Individuals living in an Oxford House™ learn or relearn values, responsible behavior and slowly, but surely, develop long-term behavior to assure comfortable sobriety – forever. Some individuals live in Oxford Houses a few months, others for many years. Together, these individuals develop each Oxford House™ into a place to learn comfortable sobriety without relapse.

An Oxford House charter has three basic requirements for the group:

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

Looking for vacancies: oxfordvacancies.com

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HOUSING

FELLOWSHIP

SELF-RELIANCE

SELF-RESPECT

FOR RECOVERING INDIVIDUALS

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Oxford House is a publicly supported non-profit 501(c) 3 Corporation. Tax deductible donations are gratefully accepted through our web-sites or mail.

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