

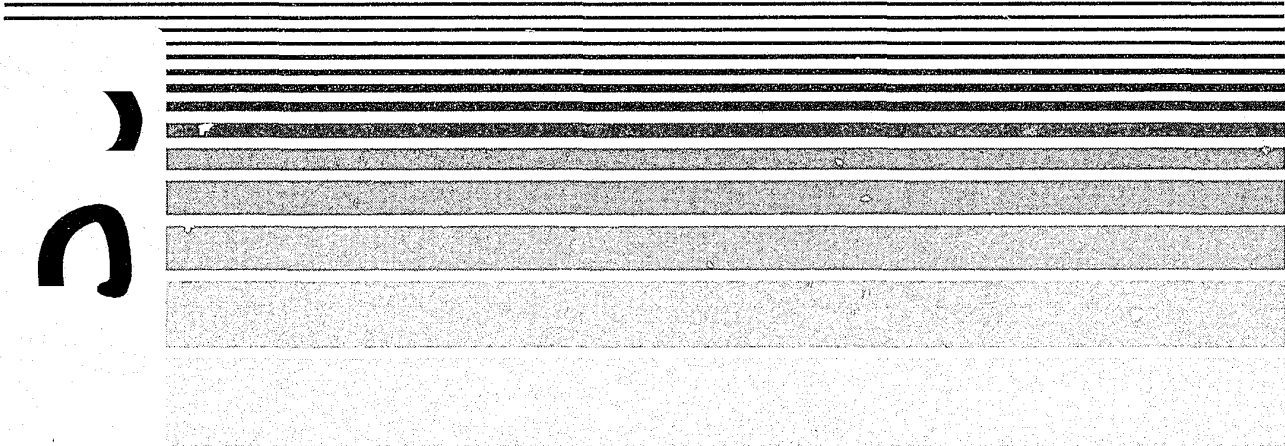


U.S. DEPARTMENT
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HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
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Mental Health Services
Administration

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

Self-Run, Self-Supported Houses for More Effective Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Addiction

Technical Assistance Publication Series Number 5



Self-Run, Self-Supported Houses for More Effective Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Addiction

Technical Assistance Publication Series Number **5**

J. Paul Molloy

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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
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Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

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Foreword

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-690) requires each state to establish a revolving fund for the purpose of making small loans to individuals recovering from alcoholism or other drug addiction to start self-run, self-supported recovery houses. The self-run, self-supported recovery house provides an opportunity for recovering individuals to live in a supportive peer environment as long as they do not relapse into using alcohol and drugs.

Recovery from the disease of alcoholism or other drug addiction is often plagued by relapse — which is simply the use of alcohol or other addictive drugs following a period of abstinence. For those addicted to alcohol or other drugs, a relapse can trigger a return to uncontrolled drug use. The self-run, self-supported recovery house provides many recovering individuals effective relapse prevention because of (1) the support gained from living with other individuals coping with the same problem and (2) the knowledge that any use of alcohol or drugs will result in immediate expulsion.

The self-run, self-supported recovery house is patterned after the well-known self-help recovery programs of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Those and similar self-help programs have demonstrated that individuals with the diseases of alcoholism or other drug addiction can recover and become productive citizens in society by helping each other develop a lifestyle that is free of substance abuse.

Fourteen years ago a group of recovering individuals adapted the self-help principles of AA and NA to group-supported living by establishing the first Oxford House. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 based the self-run, self-supported recovery home provision on the Oxford House experience. It offers a simple, cost-effective way to provide an opportunity for recovering individuals to live in a supportive environment that is free of substance abuse.

The Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (now the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) asked Oxford House, Inc., to prepare this technical assistance manual describing the experience of Oxford House and the mechanics of renting houses to be used as self-run, self-supported recovery houses. Replication of the Oxford House concept throughout the United States can be achieved on a mass basis if community leaders and the recovery community work together toward that goal. Achievement of that goal can provide addicted individuals the opportunity to recover from addiction and become productive citizens.

The problem of addiction to alcohol or other drugs is one that can be overcome by the addicted individual and society at large. Cost-effective and innovative tools must be adopted to encourage and assure prevention of alcohol or other drug abuse and, above all, to assure prevention of relapse once an addicted individual shows the desire to change his or her lifestyle.

I hope this technical assistance manual will motivate community leaders, treatment providers, and individuals recovering from alcoholism or other drug addiction to work together to provide a cost-effective way to give every addicted individual the opportunity and support to regain the ability to live a free and productive life.

Lisa W. Scheckel

Acting Director
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

Introduction

Mass replication of self-run, self-supported recovery houses became feasible as a result of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988.¹ What are they? What can they do? How do they operate? How much do they cost? Those are just a few of the questions raised since the passage of the new law.

The Administrator of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA) (now the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]) issued guidelines to the states concerning the new program April 19, 1989.² Those guidelines provided states with general knowledge about the operation of new revolving funds and the requirements of the new law as to the nature of self-run, self-supported recovery houses.

The purpose of this technical assistance manual is to further the knowledge of the public, state officials, treatment providers and the recovery community about how a self-run, self-supported recovery house works and how mass replication of such houses throughout the country can be achieved.

The new provision of law is modeled after the experience and replication of Oxford Houses which began in Silver Spring, Maryland, in 1975. Each state may make loans to recovering individuals from a revolving fund for the establishment of recovery houses that:

- Utilize no paid staff;
- Operate democratically, including admission of new residents by vote of current residents;
- Expel any residents who relapse into using alcohol or drugs; and
- Are financially self-supporting.

The four characteristics in the law are identical to the way Oxford

¹ P.L. 100-690 § 2036 requires each state to establish a \$100,000 revolving fund to make start-up loans for such houses. (Appendix E)

² Federal Register, Vol. 54, No. 74, Wednesday, April 19, 1989, pp 15807-15810. (Appendix D)

House has operated for over fourteen years³. As part of P.L. 100-690, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, Congress chose to require State revolving funds to encourage the replication of self-run, self-supported recovery houses based upon the Oxford House model.

Part I of the following material, based upon the Oxford House experience, will be helpful to those who want to know more about the establishment and replication of self-run, self-supported recovery houses. Part II of the following material describes how a state can set up a revolving fund which will encourage the mass replication of self-run, self-supported recovery houses.

□□□



Oxford House-Northampton founded in 1977 in the Chevy Chase area of Washington, D.C. is home to 13 men.

³ Oxford Houses have a fifth rule, viz., that officers are to be elected by majority vote of the residents and changed every six months. See the Oxford House Manual[®] in Appendix C --Tradition Two at page 21 of the Manual.

Part I -- The Oxford House Model

Background

Fourteen years ago, Montgomery County, Maryland decided to close a traditional halfway house because of a lack of funds. However, the men living in that halfway house were not ready to leave.

After considerable complaining, they eventually followed the advice of a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and rented the house themselves. They decided to run it democratically like a college fraternity, but with the understanding that they would vote out any resident who returned to drinking alcohol or using drugs. They called it Oxford House.⁴

Within the first few weeks of the start of Oxford House, a member did relapse and was voted out. At that point the members of Oxford House knew the self-run, self-supported recovery house concept could work, and it did.

The members of the first Oxford House organized as a non-profit corporation, opened a checking account, determined the weekly amount each resident would have to pay to cover house expenses, and wrote a manual of operations which has been effective for fourteen years. Six months after the first Oxford House started, it had a surplus of funds in its checking account of about \$1200. The thirteen men in the house faced their "wealth" in an unselfish way - they decided *unanimously* to use the extra money to rent another house.

That example was continued year after year by other Oxford Houses. When Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 in September 1988, it included a provision to encourage the development of democratically self-run, self-supported recovery houses. At that time there were fourteen Oxford Houses.

⁴ After considerable discussion concerning a name the members of the first Oxford House decided on the name "Oxford House" because several of them had just read AA Comes of Age which describes the role that the Oxford Movement played in shaping the views of the men who founded Alcoholics Anonymous. (AA Comes of Age, World Publishing, New York, 1955 pp.) According to the founders of Oxford House, not only did the name have a special significance because of their allegiance to AA but also because it "had a touch of class."

Thirteen were in Washington, D.C. and nearby Maryland, and one was in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Ten of the houses were for men and four were for women.

The number of Oxford Houses has continued to grow, and by August 1989 had reached 35. As each state implements the new revolving funds to provide loans to establish self-run, self-supported recovery houses, the national network of Oxford Houses will expand even more rapidly.

The concept of self-run, self-supported recovery houses is based upon the principle of self-help demonstrated by more than fifty years of Alcoholics Anonymous.

For those individuals who are successfully recovering from addiction to alcohol and drugs, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are well-known. One or both of these self-help organizations are usually important in each individual recovery, including recovery for individuals living in an Oxford House.⁵

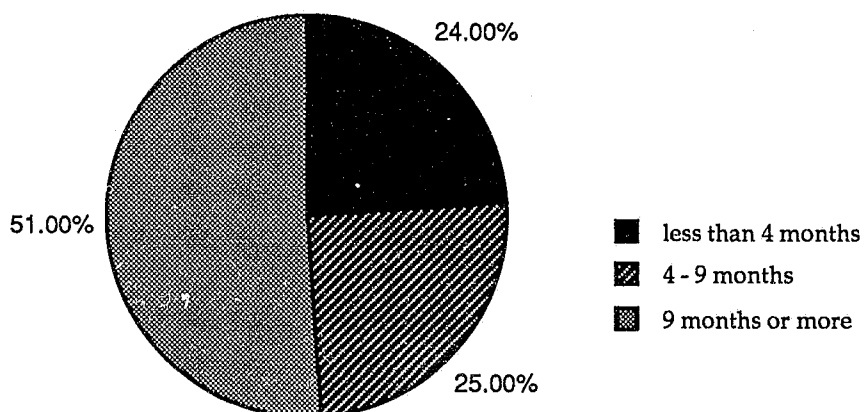
Oxford House provides a self-help recovery environment that reinforces such behavior change over the long term. The length of time needed for one to become comfortable with an alcohol and drug-free lifestyle differs, however, for each individual. Therefore, there is no time limit on how long an individual can live in an Oxford House.

**"Concepts like Oxford House are absolutely critical
in the rehabilitation area"**

*Herb Kleber, M.D.
Deputy Director, Demand Reduction
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Keynote Address
ADAMHA/ Oxford House Conference
August 7, 1989*

⁵ Periodic surveys of Oxford House residents show that members attend an average of six AA and/ or NA meetings a week. There are no AA nor NA meeting held in an Oxford House. See Appendix G for the full results of the 1988 Spring Survey.

Length of Stay - Oxford House 1988 Survey

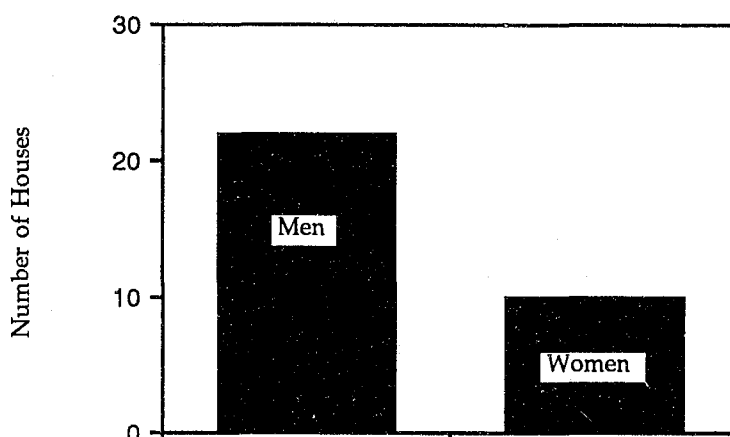


The average length of stay in an Oxford House is one year and one month but there is no time limit on how long a person can stay. Addicted individuals do not all recover at the same rate of speed.

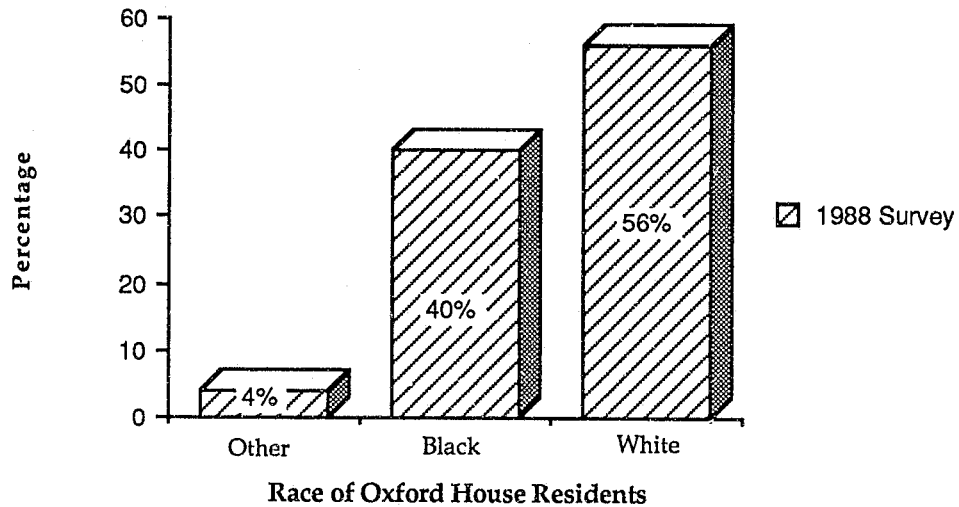
As the above graph based on the 1988 Oxford House Survey illustrates, newcomers in an Oxford House have the advantage of living with others who have a longer period of sobriety -- and the "oldtimers" provide the knowledge of how a self-run, self-supported recovery works. Once established, the residents of the recovery house use experience to foster continuing stability for all members of the house.

Oxford House works for both men and women but not on a "co-ed" basis. There are separate houses for men and for women.

Men's and Women's Oxford Houses



The 1988 Survey showed that Oxford Houses are multi-racial -- addiction is color blind and so is recovery.



All members of Oxford House benefit from the three underlying goals of Oxford House -- Recovery, Responsibility and Replication.

- Recovery is the process by which addicted individuals become free of the results of addiction for the rest of their lives;
- Responsibility is the means by which an individual gradually assumes control over his or her lifestyle so that choices can be consistently made to avoid the use of alcohol and drugs; and
- Replication is the means by which addicted individuals living in a self-run, self-supported recovery house share their newfound lifestyle of living in an alcohol and drug free environment with other individuals having a similar desire by starting other recovery houses.

The purpose of this publication is to explain both the concept and the nuts and bolts of self-run, self-supported recovery houses. Once begun, houses can be replicated throughout the nation so that eventually anyone who wants to promote recovery from addiction through residence in a self-supported, self-run recovery house will be able to do so.

□□□

The Concept

The concept underlying self-run, self-supported recovery houses is the same as the one underlying Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous -- addicted individuals can help themselves by helping each other abstain from alcohol and drug use one day at a time for a long enough time to permit a new set of values to be substituted for the values of a lifestyle in which alcohol and drugs were used.

Dr. George E. Vaillant, in his book *The Natural History of Alcoholism*, states the obvious goal in the treatment of alcoholism [or drug addiction] when he states that, "The treatment of alcoholism should be directed toward altering an ingrained habit of maladaptive use of alcohol. ..." He goes on to spell out the four components of treatment which can achieve that goal:

- (1) offering the patient a nonchemical substitute dependency for alcohol,
- (2) reminding him ritually that even one drink can lead to pain and relapse,
- (3) repairing the social and medical damage that he has experienced, and
- (4) restoring self-esteem.⁶

Vaillant also points out that providing all four components at once is not easy.

Disulfiram (Antabuse) and similar compounds that produce illness if alcohol is ingested are reminders not to drink, but they take away a cherished addiction without providing anything in return: they provide the second component but ignore the first. Prolonged hospitalization provides the first three components but ignores the fourth and eventually the first. Hospital patienthood destroys self-esteem, and when hospitalization ceases the patient loses his substitute dependency. Tranquilizing drugs provide the first component but ignore the other three. For example, providing the anxious alcoholic with tranquilizers will give temporary relief of anxiety but may also facilitate the chain of conditioned responses that lead to picking up a drink at the next point of

⁶ George E. Vaillant, *The Natural History of Alcoholism*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 300.

crisis. Over the long term, providing alcoholics with pills only reinforces their illusion that relief of distress is pharmacological, not human.⁷

Vaillant does note that "self-help groups, of which Alcoholics Anonymous is one model, offer the simplest way of providing the alcoholic with all four components referred to above."⁸ So too with Oxford House. It provides the benefits of prolonged hospitalization without the destruction of self-esteem. In fact, self esteem is restored through the exercise of responsibility, helping others, resocialization, and constructive pride in maintaining an alcohol and drug-free living environment without dependency upon any outside authority or helper.

The concept -- which seems never before to have been formalized on a democratically, self-run, and self-supported basis -- is not new.

The basic idea that one addict is a primary source of help for another has long been known and was, in fact, basic to the history of AA. Robert Thomsen, in his biography of Bill Wilson, one of the co-founders of AA, describes the first meeting between Bill and Dr. Bob Smith as follows:

They talked on for hours. Soon Dr. Bob had opened up and was speaking as frankly, as unashamedly, as Bill. When they parted after eleven o'clock, they knew something had radically changed in them both. Although they could not be specific about what it was, a spark that was to light future fires had been struck.

For Bill it had been a unique, wondrous and totally engrossing experience. After admitting his deep need to share his problems with another drunk, he had not felt the slightest desire to preach or in any way judge the other man. With a sense of incredible freedom, relief and, yes, joy, he'd felt the two of them growing closer, their talk becoming a mutual thing, and he knew they had both felt this. Two drunks had found a new, mysterious and loving kind of communication, a new language of the heart.

The link he had been seeking was located that night in Henrietta's library.⁹

⁷ Id. 301.

⁸ Id. 301.

⁹ Henrietta Siberling of Akron, Ohio, who had been a member of an Oxford Group in Akron and responsible for getting Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith together.

They had dinner together the next evening and after a few days Bill moved in with Anne and Dr. Bob in their home on Ardmore Avenue. He sent word to his proxy associates in New York that he'd be staying on in Akron, and, to his surprise, they wired some cash to him and suggested he might hire a lawyer and investigate the possibility of fraud at the stockholders meeting.¹⁰ Thus he was no longer penniless, but his primary interest now was his work with Dr. Bob and the uncanny parallels they were discovering in their stories.

Both were Vermonters, Bob the son of a judge in St. Johnsbury. Both had taken up drinking at an early age, Bob while still a student at Dartmouth, even before medical school, and from the beginning they had both gone at booze heavily. Each, except for the hells created by drinking, had had a happy marriage and each admitted he must have been born with an iron constitution to have withstood the beatings he had given himself. And each had wrecked a career that had started out brilliantly.

These were the external parallels. The interior ones were equally striking, the guilt and remorse, the defenses they'd constructed, the passionate desires and the futile efforts to understand and be in control, and finally, after seeking so many other solutions, they had both wound up trying to give shape and meaning to their lives by adhering to the excruciatingly high standards of the Oxford Group.¹¹

About ten days after Bill Wilson had moved in to live with Dr. Bob and Anne, Dr. Bob went to a medical meeting in Atlantic City and relapsed into drinking alcohol. Five days later, Dr. Bob returned to Akron drunk. His wife Anne and Bill Wilson sobered him up over a three-day period. Dr. Bob took his last drink on June 10, 1935. Bill Wilson stayed in Akron living in Dr. Bob's house on Ardmore Avenue for four months and in many ways it was the first Oxford House -- two former drunks living in an alcohol and drug-free environment focused upon helping each other and others recover from addiction to alcohol.

Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith went on to practice and refine the principles they learned in the first few months of living together in the alcohol and drug-free environment of the house on Ardmore Avenue in Akron. Their legacy to individuals now struggling to

¹⁰ Bill Wilson had been in Akron to work on the acquisition of a company in which there was a stockholders proxy fight.

¹¹ Robert Thomsen, *Bill W.*, Harper & Row, New York 1975, pp 238-239.

recover from alcoholism and drug addiction --AA-- is present in every town throughout the United States and most of the world. It is that legacy that provides the underpinning for the self-run, self-supported recovery house as an alcohol and drug-free, self-run and self-supported living environment.

The concept of a self-run, self-supported recovery house for individuals recovering from addiction is simple, but it requires individual initiative and acceptance by society for mass replication to become a reality. The sanction and the framework provided by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 and the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988 create a climate which encourages replication. The experience and expertise of Oxford House can provide the motivation and technical know-how to help individuals throughout the country make mass replication a reality.



Oxford House-Burlington, started June 15, 1989 in Vermont, is the first house to receive start-up funds from a state revolving fund.

Characteristics of Oxford Houses

Oxford House, Inc. is a network of self-run, self-supported recovery houses. It is not part of Alcoholics Anonymous or any other group, but its members rely on AA and similar self-help programs for additional outside support. In its first twelve years, it expanded quietly from one house to thirteen houses without any outside financing. Most members of Oxford House have become comfortably sober even though they had often failed in the past.

Oxford House, Inc. does not own property. It encourages groups of recovering individuals to rent houses and become affiliated with the Oxford House, Inc. network of individual houses. Such affiliation brings with it the Oxford House System which is simple but effective. The Oxford House System fosters democratically-run group housing and an operating framework tailor-made for the individual recovering from alcohol or drug addiction.

By the time many persons addicted to alcohol or drugs get serious about recovery, they have lost their normal living accommodations or at best made their living in them very difficult. Going home becomes either impossible or risky for continued recovery. Oxford House can provide a transitional home between early recovery and past homes or new homes. It can also provide a permanent home for those who decide that they prefer living in a supportive group environment to living alone.

Since Oxford House is democratically run and self-supported, the members living in an Oxford House vote to determine if an applicant for membership is accepted. When an individual is accepted for membership in an Oxford House, there is no time limit on how long he or she can live there, but use of alcohol or drugs or non-payment of rent will result in expulsion. That simple policy lies at the heart of what Oxford House is and what makes it work.

Recovering individuals interested in self-run, self-supported recovery houses have two options. If they are in an area where Oxford Houses already exist, they should investigate the possibility of admission to one of those houses. Applications for residence are available at each house. If there is not an Oxford House in their area, or if the existing houses are full, they should consider starting one.

Establishing A New Oxford House

The steps generally necessary to get ready to get a new Oxford House started are:

1. Contact Oxford House, Inc. to ask for help and obtain detailed information about "How Oxford House Works."
2. Contact other recovering individuals in the area who are interested in starting an Oxford House.
3. File an application with Oxford House, Inc. for an Oxford House Charter.

Step 1. Getting Information

In addition to reading this technical assistance manual, you may want to find out more about how an Oxford House works. Oxford House, Inc., the non-profit, tax-exempt corporation that acts as an umbrella organization for all Oxford Houses, can provide you with additional information, experience, and encouragement. You may contact:

Oxford House, Inc.
P.O. Box 994
Great Falls, Virginia 22066
Telephone (703) 444-6488
Toll Free 1-800-344-2509

Oxford House, Inc. will provide a kit designed to help individuals start an Oxford House. The kit, combined with the availability of people at Oxford House, Inc. to help answer questions, will provide the information and encouragement necessary to enable a group of recovering individuals to start a new Oxford House.

Step 2. Getting Members

Each Oxford House got started because several recovering individuals decided to work together to start it. After the first house had been going a few months, three members of that house decided to start another. Those three members became "Charter Members" of the new house -- that is, they asked the other members of the first house if they could receive authorization to replicate the first house at another location. The members of the first house not only agreed that they could, but lent them money to get the second

house started.

Step Two of starting a new house consists of finding at least two recovering individuals willing to live in the new house. Of course, it is better to find three, four, five, six or more recovering individuals who want to live together in an Oxford House from the start, but that is sometimes difficult to do. Oxford House, Inc. will encourage charter applicants to get as many charter members as possible because the larger the number, the easier it is to assume that expenses of the new house can be met. Nevertheless, interested individuals should not be discouraged from contacting the Oxford House, Inc. just because they have only a few prospects as charter members. Oxford House, Inc. will be able to suggest ways to find other prospective charter members in the particular locality. Among other principles of Oxford House is one that limits affiliation to single-sex houses accommodating at least six residents (the average number of residents in Oxford Houses is ten).

Step 3. Formally Applying For A Charter

Self-run, self-supported recovery houses can be started by anyone and may stand alone or be formally affiliated with Oxford House. Oxford House affiliation is advantageous for a new house because of mutual support that can come from such an existing organization.

Once a group has been formed which is interested in starting an Oxford House, it should file an application for a charter. A copy of an application is printed in Appendix A.

The advantage of becoming affiliated with the Oxford House Network of Recovery Houses is an ability to share the experience of other self-run, self-supported recovery houses. Member houses pay monthly dues, the amount of which is annually established by the group of individual houses. For 1989 the monthly dues per house are \$3 a resident - usually payable out of house funds rather than individual assessment. One-third of the dues goes to the Chapter that the particular house belongs to for the purpose of paying for postage, newsletters and other expenses incurred at the Chapter level. Two-thirds goes to the national organization (Oxford House, Inc.) for the purpose of paying for a central staff to facilitate expansion and provide services to individual houses, including the monthly newsletter, the telephone "hot-line," and a quarterly publication about recovery houses.

The policies and programs of Oxford House, Inc. are determined by

a Board of Directors annually elected for staggered terms by the several Oxford House Chapters.

There is no charge for the Charter, but each house must maintain its operation consistent with the following conditions:

- ❑ A new Oxford House must be run in accordance with the concept, system of operations and traditions of Oxford House as set forth in the Oxford House Manual (See Appendix C);
- ❑ Any resident member of the house must immediately leave if such member returns to using alcohol or drugs or fails to keep up with his or her share of the costs for operating the house, and
- ❑ A new Oxford House must be a good neighbor in the community and pay its bills in a timely manner.

The charter becomes a valuable asset for providing support when a house is faced with the problem of having to expel a resident because of a return to drinking alcohol or using drugs. For example, expulsion of a member who has relapsed is always difficult but it becomes easier when members balance the decision to expel against the risk of losing the house charter if they fail to maintain an alcohol and drug free environment..

Another value of the Charter is that a new Oxford House becomes part of Oxford House, Inc., a non-profit corporation which has been recognized as qualifying under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization. This status permits individuals who make donations to claim a tax deduction.

□□□

Oxford House, Inc.

hereby

grants

a charter

to

Oxford House- Burlington

June 15, 1989

Oxford House-Burlington may enjoy all the privileges of Oxford House as long as it adheres to the following three conditions:

- 1. The house must be self-run on a democratic basis;*
- 2. The house must be financially self-supported; and*
- 3. Any resident who drinks alcohol or uses drugs must be immediately expelled.*

Granted this 15th the day of June 1989 by OHI Co-founders

J. Paul Molloy

John V. O'Neill

Edwin W. Holden, II

Reduced copy of Oxford House Charter issued to Oxford House-Burlington



Finding the Right House

As a general rule Oxford Houses are located in good areas of a community and not in slums. Recovering individuals have enough to do in staying sober and straight. There is no need to add fear of safety or poor living conditions to their effort¹². Experience has shown that by living in a good house in a good neighborhood, all individuals, whether from poor, middle class or wealthy neighborhoods, value their living accommodations and have an additional incentive to stay clean and sober.

From a zoning standpoint, Oxford House has always maintained that its members should be treated the same as any residential family. In at least one locality the city council has passed a resolution finding Oxford House to be a residential family classification for zoning purposes¹³. In every situation members living in an Oxford House have proved themselves to be good neighbors and zoning ordinances have not become an issue. Moreover, the new Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988 (effective March 1, 1989) make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons such as those living together in self-run, self-supported recovery houses. (See Appendix B for a detailed analysis of the new law.)

The size of a house to be rented is significant. Experience has shown that at least four good-sized bedrooms are necessary. Experience has also shown that at least several of the bedrooms should be suitable for two people. Isolation and loneliness are threats to sobriety -- particularly for the newly-recovering. From an economic standpoint, expenses are best managed when the house is fully utilized. The goal should be to use a house as a large family

¹² While all Oxford Houses are presently in good neighborhoods, Oxford House, Inc. has occasionally considered some good houses in not very good neighborhoods. Those houses were rejected primarily because individuals recovering from addiction to drugs pointed out the existence of drug trafficking in the area. Unlike liquor stores, which do not push their product door to door, drug dealers are less passive.

¹³ The Chief of the Bureau of Inspections for the City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on September 11, 1987 made the following finding: "After reviewing your letter and review of the 'Oxford House' literature, regarding recovering alcoholics living together in a self-supported dwelling, I have concluded the proposal is within the definition of a 'family': as defined in the City of Bethlehem, Pa. Zoning Code."

would but to avoid overcrowding.

Experience has also shown that the only threat of an Oxford House being less than a good neighbor is the automobile. Members living in an Oxford House need to be careful not to use all the parking spaces in a neighborhood and not to park their cars in a way that makes their house look like a used car lot. In seeking a house to rent as a new Oxford House, keep in mind that once recovering individuals have been sober, they begin to get their finances straightened out and will often acquire a car. Can it be parked in a place that does not offend the neighbors?

Oxford House, Inc. can provide good information about the type of house to rent. However, the following rules of thumb are helpful to keep in mind:

- utilities and other costs usually run about fifty percent of monthly rent, therefore per member monthly payment will be the number of members in a house divided into 150 per cent of the rent¹⁴;
- the amount of weekly rent a member can afford depends upon the locality, but as a general rule members can afford between \$50 and \$85 a week to cover rent and other expenses;
- some vacant beds are to be expected during the first three to four months of operation (individual costs are higher when there are fewer members living in a house) because a new house takes time to become known (this can be overcome by lining up a greater number of charter members willing to move in on Day One) and some individuals will be kicked out because they relapse, thereby causing a vacancy until a new member is voted in (keeping a member's rent paid in advance minimizes the economic impact of this event); and

¹⁴ This rule of thumb applies except in regions where the rent for a four to six bedroom house is very high (above \$2,500 per month) or low (less than \$600 or \$700 a month). In high rent cases the "150% rule of thumb" will overstate the amount of cost per person and in low rent cases it will understate the cost per person. Oxford House can provide worksheets to compute actual costs. Such actual computation is always better to use than the "rule of thumb."

- new houses are generally able to get donated furnishings

Experience has shown that individual members of AA are very helpful to newly-recovering individuals who want to start an Oxford House. Newly-recovering individuals should ask older recovering members for help in finding a house to rent and getting a charter from Oxford House, Inc. approved. Some older recovering individuals may even own rental property they are willing to rent to a new Oxford House. To date every Oxford House has paid its rent on time and if a house is adequate, the residents will continue to rent it year after year.

Rehabilitation facilities, local government alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs, and local half-way houses have also proven useful as sources of help for new houses. Generally, local half-way houses have a time limit for residents and welcome the opportunity to have an Oxford House in their locality to provide further transitional housing for recovering individuals. Any doubts they have about how Oxford House works can be alleviated through contact with a member of the Oxford House Staff. It can verify that Oxford House residents make good tenants. The groups tend to live in a house year after year whereas the normal renter may move every few years. This fact alone is of great value to a landlord who avoids missing any monthly rental income and does not have to refurbish the property continually to attract a new tenant.

The physical qualities of a house should include the following:

good location - location of the house is very important since a poor location can result in drug pushers and crime; a good location can provide incentive to stay clean and sober;

adequate size - size of the house is important because enough space is needed to comfortably accommodate a large "family" of recovering individuals;

adequate facilities - facilities of the house should be adequate to accommodate the individuals living in it including one bath or shower for every four residents, a dishwasher to assure good health and at least one common room suitable for family like

gatherings to discuss the new lifestyle free of alcohol and drug use; and

proximity to public transportation - in urban areas, proximity to public transportation is important because many individuals in early recovery from addiction to alcohol or drugs will not have an automobile.

Starting a new Oxford House takes some work, but help is available and the rewards are considerable -- for many, the rewards are life-saving.

Rehabilitation facilities are often willing to help a new house since Oxford House has been of great value to many rehabilitation facilities in their efforts to provide aftercare which increases the chances of recovery. Alcohol and drug treatment programs run by local governments are usually very interested in the Oxford House concept because of its low cost and relapse prevention potential. Potential landlords with an interest in alcohol or drug abuse rehabilitation are often willing to help. Good business and doing good can go hand in hand. And, of course, individual members of AA and NA can usually be relied upon for support.



Moving In

Newly-weds in America generally "set up housekeeping" on their own. They usually do so with very few furnishings -- a bed, some linens, dishes, and few pots and pans for cooking. So, too, with the residents of a new Oxford House.

The new group that has found a house and applied for its charter cannot simply wait to get all the furnishings needed. The rent for the house must be paid; the recovering individuals need a place to live. It is often necessary, therefore, to move in with a minimum of furnishings.

The first item to obtain is beds. Frequently potential residents of the house have a bed to donate. Retailers of beds often have mismatched twin bed sets that they will donate to Oxford House -- which is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. If they will not donate the beds, they may be willing to sell the mismatched beds at a substantial discount.

Twin-sized beds are best and, whenever possible, it is advisable to have two people to a bedroom in an Oxford House in order to guard against the loneliness and depression which can be a threat to sobriety while an individual is in early recovery.

Once beds are in the new house individuals can move in -- the other necessary household furnishings can be obtained after individuals are living in the house and paying rent. Suggestions for getting the other items are listed in random order below:

- **Dishes, pots and pans** and other kitchen utensils are most often obtained by simply letting members at an AA or NA meeting know that the new house needs these items -- if that does not produce results, try "Good Will" or a thrift or second-hand shop.
- **Tables and chairs** for the kitchen and dining room are also most often obtained by letting those in AA or NA know that the new house needs tables and chairs -- others who can be asked for donations include church groups, veteran's groups, and service clubs such as the Lions, Rotary, Elks or Moose.
- **Chests of Drawers** and small tables for the bedrooms are sometimes hard to get because families have a tendency to keep chests around for extra drawer space even when they are replaced. However, if you let people know you need them, you may be surprised. Again thrift shops, household content sales and yard sales may be a source for reasonably priced chests and tables. The local furniture store may have seconds, or discontinued or damaged merchandise. A house with an Oxford House Charter will be recognized as part of a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, so that businesses and individuals can claim a tax deduction for the value of whatever is donated.¹⁵

¹⁵ Material which comes when a house receives an Oxford House Charter contains a booklet, "Reporting Donations for Tax Purposes," which explains the record keeping that you must do to permit individuals or business to claim a tax deduction. Such information can also be obtained from the local office of the United States Internal Revenue Service.

- **Sofas** and other living room furniture can be obtained by asking for donations or from second hand stores. The same is true for televisions, lamps and other household furnishings.
- Because the new Oxford House will be a family to a number of individuals who will prepare their own main meal, extra **refrigerator** space will probably be needed. The local appliance dealer will have some good second-hand refrigerators. As a rule of thumb, each member of the house should be able to use two refrigerator shelves.
- A **microwave** oven will help reduce the time that individuals need in the kitchen, but a house generally waits until a house is going a few months before it accumulate the money to buy one.
- A **clothes washer and dryer** are often standard equipment in a rental property.
- A **vacuum cleaner** and **rugs** are items that a new house usually seeks. They may not be essential, but both go a long way toward making a house a pleasant place to live in.

Although it may seem difficult to furnish a whole house, the members of an Oxford House will find that slowly but surely a house gets comfortably furnished.



"The crucial factor is what happens during that window of opportunity [when an addict has stopped using] because, as we all know, the name of the game in treatment of addiction is relapse prevention. That's where I think that programs like Oxford House are so essential."

Herb Kleber, M.D.
ADAMHA/Oxford House Conference
August 7, 1989

Checklist of Possible Sources for Donations of Recovery House Furnishings

- Twin-sized beds:
 - Department Stores and bedding stores
 - Regional mattress manufacturers
 - Furniture stores and moving companies
 - Local service agencies involved in "homelessness"
 - Salvation Army or Rescue Mission
 - Alcohol and drug rehabilitation facilities
 - AA and NA and Church groups

- Chests of drawers, chairs, tables and sofas:
 - Used furniture stores, Good Will Industries and Volunteers of America
 - AA and NA and Church groups
 - American Legion, Veteran's of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veteran's and other veteran groups

- Used refrigerators, TVs, clothes washers and dryers, vacuum cleaners and dish washers:
 - Appliance dealers
 - Apartment house owners
 - AA and NA and Church groups

- Dishes, curtains, linens, silverware, toasters, coffee makers and pots and pans
 - AA and NA and Church groups

Note: With a little thought the ideas on this checklist can be expanded.

Organizing The House

Oxford House is a **concept** and a **system of operation**. The two go hand-in-hand. The concept is that recovering individuals can live together and democratically run an alcohol and drug-free living environment which supports the recovery of every resident. The system of operation is the nuts and bolts or how to make a self-run, self-supported recovery house work.

The Oxford House System of Operation has worked well for fourteen years. Because it was developed by recovering alcoholics and recovering drug addicts, it takes into account the way responsibility is learned or relearned by those afflicted with alcoholism or drug addiction.

At the heart of the system of operations is fairness assured by democratic procedures and elected officials from within the resident community. Each House officer is democratically elected for a term not to exceed six months in the same office. The limited term of office for any particular office minimizes the chance that an individual self-run, self-supported recovery house will become dominated by an individual prone to bossism. Democracy, however, lies at the heart of the Oxford House system of operations -- both for practical and therapeutic reasons.

As products of the democratic traditions of the United States, all members of an Oxford House can readily understand the utilitarian aspects of deciding issues by a majority vote. From the New England town meeting to the Congress of the United States, the practicality of resolving disagreements through the freely-cast vote is understood. In an Oxford House the vote can resolve the color of a rug to be purchased, the assignment of clean-up chores, and the expulsion of a member who has relapse.

Perhaps less clearly understood are the reasons that a democratically self-run recovery house provides special help to recovering individuals undertaking the task of developing a new lifestyle -- often after years of practicing a lifestyle dominated by addiction to alcohol and drugs. Because Oxford House works to help individuals undergo that change in lifestyle, it is worth the time to consider the role that democratic rule by peers -- and only peers -- plays in the process. There is no better place to turn for that understanding than the political commentaries about the system of government adopted for and tested by the two hundred years of history of the United States.

A starting point is an observation written in the 50th Federalist paper used to convince the Nation's forefathers that they should adopt the Constitution. "If men were angels," said the 50th Federalist, "no government would be necessary." As recovering individuals each member of an Oxford House knows that men are not "angels". By the same token, involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous convinces one that all men are neither depraved nor immoral. Author Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. summarized the value of democracy in achieving the balance between perfection and depravity in the following ways:

Democracy, properly construed, assumes neither total perfectibility nor total depravity. It sees humans simultaneously as tainted by original sin and as capable of redemption.

It is this "capability of redemption" that permits recovering individuals to live together in an alcohol and drug-free environment and work together to preserve that environment, accept responsibility and learn a new individual lifestyle free of alcohol and drug use. Always on guard against reverting to old behavior patterns, each individual works as part of the group to learn values such as tolerance, caring and responsibility without having anyone to blame or fault for conditions as they exist. All the recovering individuals in a house are in the same boat; their common enemy is addiction to alcohol and drugs; their common goal a new lifestyle comfortably rid of both alcohol and drugs.

Just as the Constitution provides a framework for democracy to work in the United States and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions provide a framework for Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous to work, so too do the Oxford House System of Operations and Oxford House Traditions provide a framework for the self-run, self-supported recovery house to work. Some rules of procedure are necessary for democracy to work and these include the election of officers, the management of finances, acceptance of new residents, and removal of those who return to the use of alcohol or drugs.

Officers elected in an Oxford House are but "trusted servants" and their power is limited by the will of the majority and the Oxford House Traditions. The term of office in any one office is for a continuous period of but six months. (An individual can be elected to the same office again after an intervening term of six months has elapsed. This is often necessary in smaller houses having very little turnover.)

The number of officers in an Oxford House depends -- in part -- upon the particular house. Every Oxford House elects the following officers:

- President
- Treasurer
- Comptroller
- Secretary

Each of the above officers has a specific role to play in making the Oxford House System of Operations work.

The **President** presides at the weekly house business meeting of the house. In that role he or she brings up items of business in a regular order, recognizes all the members wishing to comment on any issue or to bring up new issues, and conducts votes to determine the decision of the membership, when appropriate. Usually the President of an Oxford House will be one of two individuals whose signature will be required on each check written by the House. (The other signature required is generally that of the Treasurer.¹⁶) Finally, each of the house Presidents exercises leadership by resolving disputes among house members, listens to individual members who have problems to discuss related to their own recovery, and represents the entire house in monthly Chapter meetings where several Oxford Houses in a geographic area work with each other to assure the good name and high quality of all Oxford Houses.

The **Treasurer** has primary responsibility for maintaining the finances of an Oxford House in good order. The Treasurer keeps the checking account in balance, writes checks for timely payment of house bills, collects the rent and lets the members know the financial status of the house at every weekly business meeting. Most houses post the Treasurer's Weekly Report in a prominent place in the house so that each member can examine it at his or her

¹⁶ Proper management of finances is very important in a self-run, self-supported recovery house. Two signatures are always required to write any checks. The money belongs to all the members of the house as a group and great care has to be taken to make certain it is expended only for expenditures authorized by the group.

leisure. There are no secrets when it comes to house finances.

The **Secretary** records minutes of each house business meeting. Those minutes are read at the next business meeting so that the group will be able to focus on unfinished business and continually keep track of house problems, policies and decisions. The Secretary also keeps track of applications for membership in the house, arranges interviews for applicants, and maintains a file of applicants accepted and rejected. After a house has been in existence a short period of time, the number of applications are likely to far exceed the number of spaces available.

The **Comptroller** is an assistant to the Treasurer and has primary responsibility for collecting weekly rent from the members of the house on time. Every self-run, self-supported recovery house charges each member the same amount of weekly rent and the amount of rent is an equal share of the house expenses. Because there is no "fat" in the weekly rent assessments, everybody must pay on time. Each week the entire house discusses what to do about any member's overdue rent. In general, most houses try to collect rent at least one week in advance of when it is due.

Some houses elect a house Coordinator to oversee shared chores to keep the house clean both inside and out. Working together to keep a house clean is one of the ways house members learn responsibility and gain self-esteem.

Group decisions are made by majority vote, except with respect to admission of new members into the group. To admit a new member, an 80% favorable vote by existing members is needed. The purpose of the 80% vote is three-fold: (1) acceptance of a new member into the group involves a commitment by nearly everyone in the house and a newcomer should be assured a supportive environment when he or she moves in; (2) knowing that an 80% acceptance vote is needed, the newcomer will value his or her admission more than if admission were by a simple majority, and (3) an 80% admission vote forces thoughtful consideration by the entire house when a newcomer applies for admission.

The Oxford House Manual (See Appendix C) provides guideposts for organization of an Oxford House. Within a matter of weeks the self-run, self-supported recovery house can be operating smoothly if organizational procedures are followed, including a business meeting in the house at least once a week. (There are no AA or NA meetings held in an Oxford House, but the members of a house

tend to go to an average of six AA or NA meetings outside the house each week.)

The importance of the weekly business meeting cannot be overstated. It not only serves to keep the members of a house up-to-date concerning the financial matters of the house but also serves as a place to resolve personality differences between house members. It also provides a forum in which peer pressure can be used to encourage each member to work his or her own 12-step program of recovery. In brief, the house meeting becomes an important opportunity for members to help each other keep on a steady course to develop a new comfortable lifestyle that is free of alcohol and drug use.

The most difficult -- and most important decision -- a self-run, self-supported recovery house has to make is whether or not a resident has returned to using alcohol or drugs. The decision is made at a meeting of the house residents. The facts are considered by the members -- all of whom know about addiction from their own experiences -- and a vote is taken on whether or not a relapse has occurred. If a majority of the members vote that the resident has relapsed, he or she is must leave immediately.

Since recovering addicts are highly vulnerable to relapse, it is likely that many houses will have some members who relapse. Each member, however, realizes that the system works only if the relapser is expelled. The common welfare of the group in maintaining an alcohol and drug-free living environment is too great to risk by not expelling any individual at the first sign of a relapse. Moreover, each member knows that failure to expel a member who has used drugs or alcohol places the charter of their house at risk. Oxford House, Inc. makes it clear that a charter can be revoked if members who return to using are not expelled.

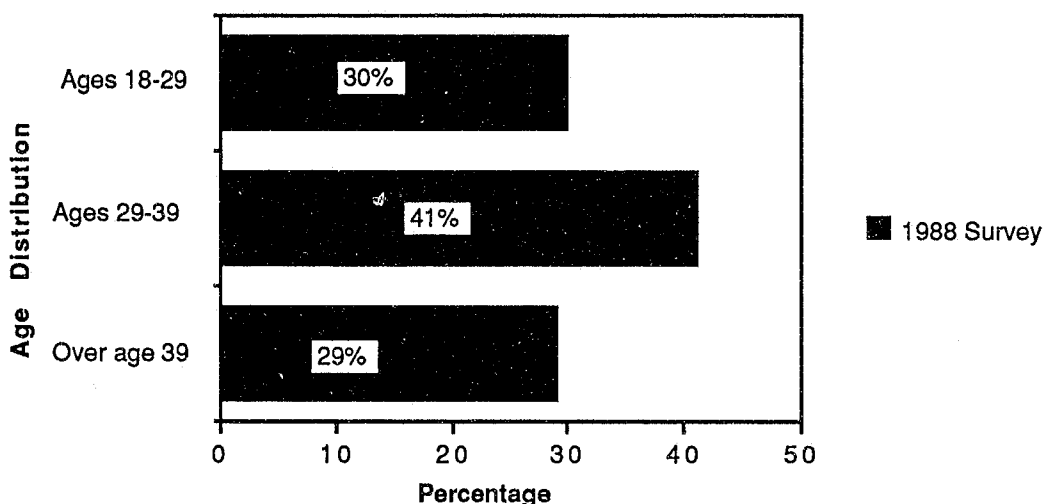
Once a member has been expelled, he or she is normally not accepted back into the same Oxford House. However, the member may be accepted into another Oxford House following a period of thirty days' sobriety.

The expulsion of relapsers has a positive effect on both the relapser and the other members of the house. As painful as an expulsion may be, it is a judgment by one's peers. The peers themselves who make the difficult decision seem to have their own sobriety reinforced.

The democratic nature of the house organization, the written system of operations, the election of officers, the written traditions and the grant of the charter all work together to promote recovery through the exercise of responsibility. As the members enjoy their recovery and realize the role that the self-run, self-supported recovery house has played in recovery, they help replicate the experience for others by starting another recovery house.



Age Distribution of Oxford House Residents



I had tried and tried to get clean, but every time I would complete a rehab, I would go back to my old neighborhood, meet old friends and start using again. Thank God for Oxford House. I have been clean for over two years and work everyday.

*John S.
ADAMHA/ Oxford House Conference*



Trouble-Shooting

As with any human endeavor, there are barriers to be overcome in establishing and operating self-run, self-supported recovery houses. Over the last fourteen years Oxford House has probably encountered most of the barriers or troubles likely to affect a self-run, self-supported recovery house. The major ones include:

□ Who signs the lease?

The issue of who signs the Oxford House lease is one that frequently arises. Since most of the properties rented as self-run, self-supported recovery houses are single family houses, many landlords or rental agents are unsure about who will be liable for the rent in a group house. The problem may be further complicated by the fact that in early recovery most of the individuals who will live in the house will not have a good credit rating.

There are several ways to resolve this issue. First, it is important to explain what a self-run, self-supported recovery house is to the landlord and/or rental agent. Once they understand how it works most landlords are willing to have the first three or four residents sign the lease on behalf of the group. From the landlord's standpoint, this means that the individuals in the group at any given time are responsible for the rent.

Second, if the landlord and/or rental agent are unwilling to accept the signature of several individuals who will be living in the house on behalf of the group, someone in the AA or NA community with a good credit rating may be willing to co-sign the lease along with the residents of the house. In either situation, Oxford House, Inc. is willing (if a new house is to be affiliated with Oxford House, Inc.) to agree to "use its best efforts" to keep the house full and monitor the timeliness of rent payments.

□ What about zoning laws?

Some jurisdictions have zoning laws that restrict the number of unrelated individuals who can live in a house. These rules are often used to keep group homes out of good neighborhoods.

Oxford Houses have always been able to locate in good neighborhoods, although debate and discussion have sometimes been necessary to achieve that result. Today, recovery houses are protected against such discrimination, but it is always good to know the way to cope with neighborhood concerns.

As a matter of practice, Oxford House, Inc. does not seek prior approval of zoning regulations before moving into a residential neighborhood. It considers itself no different from a biological family, and its members just move into any suitable house.

Sometimes a city is appreciative that Oxford House, Inc. has decided to open a self-run, self-supported recovery house and acts to avoid any zoning questions. In 1987, city officials of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania carefully read all the Oxford House, Inc. material before an Oxford House located there and learned how an Oxford House would work. Based on that investigation, the Chief of the Bureau of Inspections found :

"After reviewing your letter and review of the 'Oxford House' literature, regarding recovering alcoholics living together in a self-supported dwelling, I have concluded the proposal is within the definition of a 'Family' as defined in the City of Bethlehem, PA. Zoning Code."¹⁷

"Family" is the proper characterization of an Oxford House. The members of a self-run, self-supported recovery house behave just like a family and should be treated as such by every jurisdiction.

¹⁷ Letter dated September 11, 1987 from Stephen L. Chanitz -- Chief, Bureau of Inspections.

The highest Court in the State of New York has ruled that any attempt in that state to impose a restriction on the number of unrelated individuals residing together as a functionally equivalent family is invalid unless the same restrictions are imposed on related persons. *Baer v. Town of Brookhaven, et. al.*, State of New York Court of Appeals (March 23, 1989)

Moreover, the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988 make unlawful any such restrictions which otherwise deny or make unavailable choice of housing by individuals with disabilities. Individuals recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction are within the class of disabled individuals now nationally protected from restrictions related to housing by the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988. (See Appendix B for an analysis of the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988.)

Some states have already passed state laws to discourage any efforts by local jurisdictions to use local land use laws and health and safety laws to thwart the intent of the new federal law. On May 25, 1989 Massachusetts passed "An Act Prohibiting Housing Discrimination Against Disabled Persons" which states:

... Imposition of health and safety laws or land-use requirements on congregate living arrangements among non-related persons with disabilities that are not imposed on families and groups of similar size or other unrelated persons shall constitute discrimination. ...¹⁸

The City of Cambridge, Massachusetts is already considering the repeal of local ordinances which would have had the effect of limiting group homes for the disabled. Undoubtedly, other jurisdictions and states will do likewise in order to comply with the new law and the realization that group recovery homes are a cost-effective way to meet the social needs of any community.

The Fair Housing Act is a whole new ball game.

Linda Zazove, Esq.
Land of Lincoln Legal Services
East St. Louis, Illinois
ADAMHA/ Oxford House Conference
August 7, 1989

¹⁸ Chapter 106, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, enacted June 5, 1989.

- What happens when an Oxford House fails to expel an individual who returns to using alcohol or drugs?

An Oxford House charter imposes a condition that anyone who relapses into using alcohol and drugs must be expelled. P.L. 100-690, requiring States to establish the revolving fund, has the same requirement.

If an Oxford House fails to expel a resident returning to use of alcohol or drugs, Oxford House, Inc. will quickly learn of it. Part of the quality control system of Oxford House, Inc. is to provide local AA and NA members with access to a toll-free telephone number to easily report such charter violations. Once Oxford House, Inc. learns of a charter violation, it quickly moves to enforce the charter provisions in a member house.

- What if an Oxford House has vacancies?

Vacancies in an Oxford House for any period of time can make it difficult for the house to pay its rent and other bills. If a house is unable to fill vacancies, it can become financially unviable.

Generally every Oxford House has more applicants than it can accommodate. However, if a house is having difficulty in finding applicants, Oxford House, Inc. can help by contacting local treatment providers. Oxford House, Inc. also maintains a vacancy list to refer individuals within a geographic region to houses with openings.

- What if the rent or other bills are not paid?

The first thing that happens is that the creditor will notify Oxford House, Inc.. In such a case Oxford House, Inc. will immediately provide technical assistance to a member house to help get its finances in order so that its bills can be paid in a timely manner.

The house in financial trouble has several alternatives including an increase in charges to its residents. One of the conditions that a house agrees to when it is granted its charter is to pay its bills in a timely manner. Experience has shown that the self interest in the residents of a house to make the house work means that financial

problems seldom arise. One of the advantages of individual houses being organized into chapters is that one house helps another to resolve operational difficulties before a serious problem arises.

- How can a self-run house deal with violent behavior by a resident?

The house holds a meeting and a majority of the members may vote to expel a member because of disruptive behavior. As a factual matter, there have only been a couple of instances of disruptive behavior in fourteen years. In one instance, the individual had a mental health disability for which she rejected the house recommendation that she seek treatment. In the other case, the individual refused to cooperate with the other members of the house in doing chores or attending business meetings over a period of several months.

- What if a member becomes unemployed and cannot pay his or her rent?

The financial problems of an individual member are considered by all the members of a house at a house meeting. Usually the member without a job is given advice and assistance by other members to get another job. By pooling the job information of the entire group, job opportunities are increased. More importantly, the support of the group helps the individual without a job to gain the initiative necessary to look for and get a job. Each house is encouraged not to let any member get behind in his or her rent. As a general rule each member pays at least one week in advance. By having members pay rent on a weekly basis at least a week in advance, it is possible for a house to give the out-of-work member some latitude, but all members who are laid off or fired are strongly encouraged to get another job quickly. If a member refuses and gets behind in rent, he or she is expelled. The welfare of the group comes first.

- What if the lease is not renewed on a particular house?

As with an ordinary family, if a lease is not renewed, the Oxford House group moves. The members will always have some advance notice and can easily find another house. For example, Oxford House-In-The Park was started in 1977 and leased from an individual in the Foreign Service. His tour of duty overseas ended

in July 1981. The men were notified in April 1981 that the lease would not be renewed. They found another house in Washington, D.C. on Ingomar Street and leased it for two years from a professor who had transferred to the University of Michigan. In May 1983 the group learned that the professor was returning to Washington and found a third house on Nineteenth Street. Today that house is known as Oxford House-Nineteenth Street and is one of the older houses in the Oxford House network of houses even though it has been known under two previous names (reflecting its location).



Oxford House-Kalorama
Washington, D.C.

Part II -- The State Revolving Fund

Setting Up and Operating A State Revolving Fund

On April 19, 1989, the Administrator of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration issued guidelines to states for the establishment of revolving funds for loans to initiate group homes for recovering substance abusers. Those guidelines, while advisory only, outline some options available to States for meeting the requirements of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, P.L. 100-690. (The Guidelines are reprinted in Appendix D.)

The purpose of this section is not to reiterate the "Guidelines," but rather to discuss methods States may use to implement the law. It is important in establishing loan mechanisms to remember that the resulting recovery houses must be self-run and self-supported -- the key elements in the new program¹⁹.

Establishing the Fund

A State must establish its revolving fund as a prerequisite to receiving its FY 1990 ADMS Block Grant award. The fund must total at least \$100,000 and can come from any available source of State funds. Each State must decide where to place the money for the fund.

Vermont, for example, has decided to place the \$100,000 revolving loan fund within the custody of the State Office of Economic Opportunity. However, it will use Oxford House, Inc. to (1) package some loan applications, (2) collect all loan repayments, and (3) provide the State with monthly reports showing both financial and demographic details about house occupancy and vacancies. In addition, Vermont provided Oxford House, Inc. a grant to (1) open the first few houses in the State, and (2) make bridge loans for leases for new rental recovery houses. (See the role of bridge loans below.)

New Jersey has decided to establish an earmarked escrow account within the health department to authorize grants to Oxford House,

¹⁹ State officials need to keep an arm's length distance in dealing with self-run houses once they are established. Too often, recovering addicts tend to create "we -them" situations in order to shift responsibility for their own behavior from themselves to someone else or some institutional situation. In a self-run recovery house, the group is all in the same boat and individuals are more apt to accept full responsibility for their own behavior.

Inc. for the purpose of assembling loan packages. Oxford House, Inc. will (1) package loan applications, (2) collect all loan repayments, (3) provide the state with monthly reports, and (4) document start-up costs to meet the requirements of State auditors. To enable Oxford House, Inc. to provide technical assistance personnel to start new houses and make bridge loans, the State will grant Oxford House enough to cover costs and bridge loans.

Massachusetts has designated the association of treatment providers to manage the revolving loan fund. It is unclear at this time how the application process, collection of loan repayments, and data collection will take place.

An effective revolving fund is dependent upon: (1) fund maintenance, (2) loan approval, and (3) collection. Each of these elements is discussed below.

Fund Maintenance

Because the \$100,000 fund is a revolving fund, repayments to the fund must be returned to the fund. This simply means that the \$100,000 fund must be maintained in a segregated account and as loans are repaid they must be credited to that account.

Record keeping must be maintained to show:

- the amount of a particular loan;
- installment payments on the particular loan,
- amount of loan outstanding at any particular time,
and
- amount of loan repaid.

In addition, each account should reflect any late payment fees assessed. The law specified that a late payment should be assessed for any installment which is late. Vermont has established a flat late payment penalty of \$25.

The law is silent concerning the right of a State to charge interest on a loan. The purpose of the revolving fund is not to gain earnings, but to encourage the establishment of self-supported recovery houses. In order to make the loans as manageable as possible for the recipients, the fund may choose to forgo interest charges on loans to recovery houses.

PAYMT NO.	3	OXFORD HOUSE-BURLINGTON 37-0001 VT	DUE DATE	AMOUNT DUE
			OCT 15 89	\$170.00
STATE LOAN PROGRAM PAY PROMPTLY TO HELP START OTHER RECOVERY HOUSES			AFTER THIS DATE OCT 30 89 LATE FEE	PAY THIS AMOUNT \$204.00 \$34.00
OXFORD HOUSE INC FINANCIAL OFFICE PO BOX 994 GREAT FALLS, VA 22066-0994				

COUPON MUST ACCOMPANY PAYMENT

A copy of the coupon receipt book issued by Oxford House, Inc. as part of its loan collection service.

Loan Approval

Approval of a loan requires that: (1) an application must be made, (2) the applicant must affirm that the house to be rented can be used to house four or more recovering individuals, and (3) the recovery house will be democratically self-run (including admission of new residents), self-supported, and alcohol and drug-free (for example, any resident who uses alcohol or drugs will be expelled). These conditions can be affirmed by having an affirmation clause in the application for the loan. (See Appendix F)

The State may delegate the loan approval procedure. In Vermont and New Jersey, Oxford House, Inc. acts as the approval agent for loan applicants and, as noted below, fulfills the practical need for making bridge loans to start new houses efficiently. (See "bridge loans" below.)

In addition to the specific affirmations made by the individual or group of individuals applying for a start-up loan, the State official or loan agent must make a judgment as to whether the proposed recovery house will be viable and therefore able to repay the loan. This judgment is of necessity subjective, but two standards should be considered:

- the applicant should be recovering from addiction to alcohol and/or drugs; and
- the house to be rented, if already lined up, should be suitable for four or more individuals to live in; if the house is not already lined up, the applicant should show an awareness of what would constitute a "suitable house."

Oxford House experience has shown that the amount of the rent and the physical nature of the house may be the most important determinants of whether a house will survive. Individuals come and go in an Oxford House, but the capacity of the house, the rental cost and the cost of utilities remain constant. The house must have enough room for enough individuals so that cost burden on each individual will be manageable. When a group has a particular rental house lined up at the time of loan application, individual cost shares can easily be computed. But when a group has no particular rental house in mind, the cost formula to determine individual rent payments²⁰ should be explained to the applicants.

The Oxford House Manual (See Appendix C) should be provided with each approved loan application, because it describes a system of democratic operation which has been successfully followed for years. While the new law does not specify a particular manual of operations, it does specify the basic elements contained in the Oxford House Manual -- a democratic system of operations, a financial accountability system, and expulsion of individuals who relapse.

Loan Repayment

Although loans must be repaid within two years, loan recipients should be given an option to repay in a shorter period of time. For example, Vermont offers loan recipients the option of choosing a repayment schedule of 6 months, 12 months, 18 months or 24 months.²¹ Even after an initial determination as to the pay-back schedule a house should be permitted to pay back the loan at a faster pace than scheduled. Not only does more prompt payment provide additional capital for the State revolving fund to provide

²⁰ As used in the context of individual costs for living in a group house, rent means the proportional share of the rent for the house plus staples and utilities including basic telephone charges. In the Washington area a rule of thumb is that the total amount will be 150% of the rent. Where rents are lower, the total cost will be more than 150% of rent. Conversely, while there are few regions of the country with higher rental prices, the total cost in such a market would be less than 150% of the rent.

²¹ For groups committed to the concept that it is desirable to provide an opportunity for recovery houses to expand as AA or NA groups do, the shorter loan repayment period will be selected in order to replenish the revolving fund quickly in order to enable as many individuals as possible to get start-up loans for new houses.

for additional houses, but many times it permits a house to utilize surplus funds to reduce house debt whenever possible.

Responsibility for loan repayment rests with the group living in the recovery house rather than with the individuals who apply for the loan to establish the house initially. The reason is obvious. If one of the original applicants relapses, he or she will be expelled from the house and will not benefit from the proceeds of the loan. Therefore, members who leave or are expelled from a house are not responsible for loan repayment after they leave. However, all individuals living in the house during the time the loan is outstanding are direct beneficiaries of the loan and should contribute to the loan repayment whether they are original house residents or joined the house later.

As with any loan, definite terms make it easier on both creditor and debtor to understand the responsibilities for repayment. Each repayment installment should be for a specific amount, due on a specific date, and subject to a defined late payment fee. In those States where Oxford House handles loan repayment collection, the debtor group is given a coupon book containing a coupon for each installment payment due. The coupon contains the due date, the amount due, and the address to which the payment should be sent. The coupon also shows the late payment if the loan repayment is not received by the due date. The penalty for a late payment is deliberately set at a high amount (the greater of \$25 or 20% of amount due) in order to encourage timely payment. The penalties for late payments will be turned over to the revolving fund.

The coupon system allows Oxford House to spot possible trouble spots quickly. For example, late payment may indicate that a group recovery house is malfunctioning. Whenever a repayment is late, the house is contacted by a member of AA or NA to ascertain the reason for the late payment. AA or NA members have the knowledge and sensitivity in dealing with recovering addicts necessary to get a receptive reaction to suggestions for improved house management. If the lateness is caused by relapses, an individual in AA or NA can quickly report that to Oxford House, Inc. and the membership of the house will be restructured to permit it to function effectively.

As part of the loan collection process by Oxford House, Inc., the recovery house is encouraged to provide demographic data concerning its residents. Such data is essential for the legislatively required overall evaluation of the recovery process. (Section 2039 of

P.L. 100-690) Oxford House, Inc. will provide each State which uses its collection process a monthly report showing the status of the loan for each individual house, a detailed demographic profile of house residents, and mid-month vacancies, if any. This report informs State officials of the current status of the fund and the profile of the recovery house population within the State.

Bridge Loans

In most States, a check for an approved loan is not likely to be processed fast enough by a State custodian of the revolving fund to provide an applicant group with the funds necessary to close a rental deal quickly. For this reason, both Vermont and New Jersey have made provision for Oxford House, Inc. to advance a bridge loan to an approved applicant group so it can complete a lease on a house.²² It is the nature of the rental business for landlords to rent properties to tenants on a first-come, first-served basis. A landlord is willing to hold property only if no other individual or group wants to rent it. This creates a time-sensitive situation to which most State agencies cannot respond. The "bridge loan" solves that problem.

Bad Debts

In most cases the loan will be repaid on schedule. However, if a recovery house fails, a State could obtain a judgment that would permit it to obtain a lien on the house's furnishings, which it could then sell. The proceeds from such sales could be placed in the revolving fund.

Oxford House, Inc. will use its best efforts to assure that any recovery house which is part of its network of houses does not fail. By granting charters to individual houses in its network of houses, Oxford House, Inc. is able to enforce democratic operation, sound financial management and the maintenance of an alcohol and drug-free living environment for individual houses -- primarily

²² An advance of grant funds to manage recovery house start-up provides Oxford House, Inc. with capital to earmark for bridge loans within the donor state. A state can utilize its ADMS block grant funds for this purpose, but may not take the funds from the principal of its state revolving fund. An amount of \$8,000 to \$12,000 is usually sufficient to permit aggregate bridge loans within a state because the state should be able to process payments from the revolving fund within a two to three week period. It is unlikely that more than three houses requiring bridge loans would be started within that period of time.

through the peer pressure of chapters through which three to twenty houses meet monthly to assure quality control within the group.

Data Reporting

Data concerning the establishment and existence of self-run, self-supported recovery houses is necessary for two reasons. First, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, which created the revolving fund which supports recovery houses, contains a provision that makes subsequent State block grant funding (Fiscal Year 1990 and beyond) contingent upon the establishment and operation of such a fund. To provide information satisfactory to the Secretary (Department of Health and Human Services) that the revolving funds have been established, States must collect data to document and support these activities. ADAMHA will issue guidance to the States in early 1990 on what information needs to be reported by the States on these activities in the annual block grant report, which is also required by the legislation. (In Fiscal Year 1993, these block grants began to be administered through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]).

Second, the Act also calls for an evaluation of alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs, including the effect of living in recovery houses. For those states in which Oxford House is handling the collection of loan repayments, data concerning the establishment of the recovery houses will be automatically provided. Where Oxford House is not involved, State block grant authorities will be responsible for the collection of data as required by ADAMHA (now SAMHSA). During its existence, Oxford House has made data collection part of its culture. Each resident of a house fills out an application and a periodic survey form which describes the background of the individual and other demographic data necessary for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the recovery process.

Such data collection should be encouraged on a voluntary basis from within the self-run, self-supported recovery house network itself. To do otherwise can compromise the self-run aspect of such houses, or result in very low participation in data provision by individuals residing in a house. Oxford House residents consider such data collection as a task or duty that can help improve treatment for other alcoholics and drug addicts.

□ □ □

Conclusion

The self-run, self-supported recovery house is not new. Oxford House, Inc., has demonstrated for nearly fifteen years that it can work well. The experience of Oxford House, Inc., demonstrates that the cost-effective, self-run, self-supported recovery house can be replicated on a mass basis across the country.

Oxford House is an important tool for recovery from addiction to alcohol and drugs because it provides an alcohol and drug-free living environment in which recovering individuals help each other. This principle of self-help is the bedrock of treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction.

Houses suitable for rental as self-run, self-supported recovery houses exist. Zoning barriers which may have existed in the past no longer exist.

The mechanics of renting houses, furnishing them and operating them as self-run, self-supported recovery houses are not difficult, but they do require organization and encouragement. The concept and system of operation developed by Oxford House, Inc., is available to government officials, treatment professionals and the recovery community to help develop self-run, self-supported recovery houses on a mass basis.

The requirement that each state establish a revolving fund will require some effort but the establishment and administration of such a fund is not difficult. The Oxford House model has been replicated for fifteen years. With start-up money available in each state the pace of replication can be accelerated nationwide. The self-help nature of the recovery house program makes it very cost-effective and the technical services available from Oxford House, Inc., and SAMHSA permit prompt implementation of state revolving loan funds.

□ □ □

Epilogue

On August 7 and 8, 1989, ADAMHA and Oxford House conducted a two-day conference at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, D.C. on "The Self-Run, Self-Supported Recovery House Program." The theme of the conference was "Recovery, Responsibility and Replication." Officials of forty-three States and over sixty individuals interested in the field of recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction attended the conference.

The conference covered the material in this technical manual and much more. A copy of the conference program is contained in Appendix H.



APPENDIX A
OXFORD HOUSE CHARTER APPLICATION

Application For Oxford House Charter

The individuals whose signatures are below hereby apply for an Oxford House charter:

1. Applicants (Three or more):

<u>Names:</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Date of last Drink or Drug Use</u>
(A) _____		
(B) _____		
(C) _____		
(D) _____		

2. Current Address of first proposed Charter Members:

- (A) _____
- (B) _____
- (C) _____
- (D) _____

3. Address of proposed Oxford House:

4. Read the attached "Information and Requirements for Getting An Oxford House Charter" and send this application to the address below. Remember that a charter is given on a 90-day "conditional" basis. At the end of 90 days the Charter becomes permanent if during the 90 day start-up period the new house has: (1) set-up an approved checking account, (2) elected all House officers, (3) held at least 8 weekly business meetings and submitted minutes of those meetings, (4) posted in the House and sent in six weekly financial reports and (5) had two members of a local AA or NA group send a letter to OHI recommending that the Charter be made permanent.

(complete the other side of this application)

5. The proposed Oxford House has ___bedrooms, ___bathrooms, and the monthly rent is \$_____. Date of occupancy of house was (or will be) _____.

Other comments concerning the proposed house:

6. In the event there are any questions concerning this application, please list the name, address and telephone number of the person we should contact.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

7. Does each charter member agree to abide by the following three conditions of the Oxford House Charter:

1. The Oxford House must be run on a democratic basis using the Oxford House system of operations in the Oxford House Manual;
2. The Oxford House must be financially self-supporting and pay its bills in a timely manner; and
3. The Oxford House must expel any member who uses drugs or alcohol or fails to pay his or her fair share of expenses.

Signed: (A) _____ Date: _____ Telephone _____

(B) _____ Date: _____ Telephone _____

(C) _____ Date: _____ Telephone _____

(D) _____ Date: _____ Telephone _____

List any other comments below:

Information and Requirements for Getting An Oxford House Charter

An Oxford House Charter is a very special document. It makes a self-run, self-supported recovery house part of the Oxford House Network of Recovery Houses. As part of that network a recovery house can benefit from the fifteen year experience of all other Oxford Houses by sharing the experience, strength and traditions of a success.

It costs no money to get an Oxford House Charter but it does require commitment and work. Oxford House values its reputation and can not risk a bad name by simply giving every group that wants a charter one – without any showing that the group has the desire to adhere to the three basic conditions required under the charter. Each Oxford House Charter requires that the group recovery house receiving a charter always meets the following three conditions:

1. The House must be democratically self-run,
2. The House must be financially self-supporting, and
3. Any resident who returns to using alcohol or drugs must immediately be expelled.

The three conditions of an Oxford House Charter are at the heart of the Oxford House concept and must be met by every Oxford House in order to keep the good reputation of Oxford House. Because it is important that every Oxford House adhere to the high standards of Oxford House, Inc., a permanent charter is not granted until it is reasonably certain that a new house will always operate in accordance with the conditions of a charter. That is why a new group must demonstrate that it is serious about wanting to become an Oxford House.

A ninety-day "Conditional Charter" is given a new house to permit it to show that it is serious about running its house in accordance with the Oxford House system of operations. During the ninety-day period of a "Conditional Charter," the Oxford House Board of Directors will ascertain if a new house is serious about wanting to be an Oxford House.

At the end of 90 days a new Oxford House must :

- Have an approved house checking account;
- Have all House officers elected;
- Have held at least 8 weekly business meetings (verified by having the President or Secretary send a copy of the minutes to Oxford House Headquarters);
- Have posted in the House and submitted a copy to Oxford House National Headquarters six weekly financial reports; and
- Have two members of a 12 Step Recovery Program in the local area send a letter to Oxford House National Headquarters recommending that the House be given a regular charter as an Oxford House.

The toll-free telephone number for Oxford House National Headquarters is 1-800-344-2509.

APPENDIX B
THE IMPACT OF 1988 FAIR HOUSING ACT
AMENDMENTS ON LAND-USE REGULATIONS
AFFECTING DISABLED HOUSING GROUPS
&
"GOOD NEIGHBORS IN GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS"

Oxford House

A Family in Recovery

A Look At

The Effect Of Zoning Laws

on

Replication of Oxford Houses

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P.O. Box 994
Great Falls, Virginia 22206
Telephone (703) 444-6488

**Oxford House, Inc. thanks USF&G for printing this material to encourage
the mass replication of self-run, self-supported recovery houses.**

Oxford House

A Family in Recovery

Oxford House, Inc. has operated a network of self-run, self-supported recovery houses for nearly fifteen years. They are successful because they are modelled on the concept of "family" and the family values of tolerance, respect, cooperation, responsibility, sharing and concern.

During its existence Oxford House has rented houses in good neighborhoods. The reason that this has been possible is that jurisdictions wanting cost-effective successful recovery for individuals addicted to alcohol or drugs have viewed Oxford House just as it views itself -- a family of members helping each other develop a lifestyle without any use of alcohol or drugs.

For example, in 1987 city official of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania carefully read all the Oxford House material before Oxford House located there and learned how Oxford House worked. Based on that investigation, the Chief of the Bureau of Inspections found :

"After reviewing your letter and review of the "Oxford House" literature, regarding recovering alcoholics living together in a self-supported dwelling, I have concluded the proposal is within the definition of a "Family" as defined in the City of Bethlehem, PA. Zoning Code."¹

"Family" is the proper characterization of an Oxford House. The members of the self-run, self-supported recovery house behave just like a family and should be treated as such by every jurisdiction. No jurisdiction attempts to limit the number of individuals in a "family" who can live in a dwelling.

The highest Court in the State of New York has ruled that any attempt in that state to impose a restriction on the number of unrelated individuals residing together as a functionally equivalent family is invalid unless the same restrictions are imposed on related persons. *Baer v. Town of Brookhaven, et al.* State of New York Court of Appeals (March 23, 1989)

¹ Letter dated September 11, 1987 from Stephen L. Chanitz -- Chief, Bureau of Inspections.

On the national level (as explained below in the analysis of the Fair Housing Act Amendments Act of 1988, P.L. 100-430, by the Mental Health Law Project), it is clear that the Fair Housing Act Amendments make unlawful any restrictions which otherwise deny or make unavailable housing to individuals with disabilities. Recovering individuals are within the class of individuals with disabilities and are nationally protected by the new law from restrictions related to choice of housing.

When Congress was considering the passage of P.L. 100-430 Senator Weicker emphasized the law's general purpose in ending segregation:

The major barrier faced by people with disabilities today - - discrimination-- is not going to go away until we find ways to end their segregation and isolation from the rest of society. 134 Cong. Rec. S 10552 (daily ed. August 2, 1988)

Senator Alan Cranston highlighted the law's specific purpose:

Ensuring nondiscrimination in housing means ensuring an essential element of independence and integration into the community for disabled individuals. The right to vote, to work, and to travel freely are all important aspects of an individual's life, but none is more elementary than having the freedom to choose where and how one lives. Housing is shelter -- but it is much more. It's the opportunity to be part of a community. 134 Cong. Rec. S10556 (daily ed. August 2, 1988)

The "community" which makes up each Oxford House is a very special one built on democratic self-management and self-support. Individuals recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction live together as members of a group which operates with a very special set of rules and traditions. Any member who returns to the use of alcohol or drugs is immediately expelled by the other members of the community. All members help each other develop a lifestyle free of alcohol or drug use by living together in a group sufficiently large enough to provide the opportunity for responsibility and socialization in a supportive environment.

The Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988 facilitate the national goal to mass replicate the cost-effective missing link Oxford House brings to the process of recovery from addiction to alcohol and drugs.

The Impact of the Fair Housing Amendments on Land-Use Regulations Affecting People with Disabilities

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, effective March 12, 1989, for the first time brings people with disabilities under the protection of the federal fair housing law. The amendments will make a major difference for individuals faced with discrimination by sellers, agents or landlords. Just as important, the new law will have a sweeping impact on land-use regulations affecting housing for people with disabilities.

Many government-imposed restrictions on the ability to open group homes or other housing for people with disabilities will be a violation of federal law. These include restrictions contained in state and local laws, such as special use-permit requirements, dispersion rules and limitations on the number of residents in group homes. Similarly, private constraints on housing for people with disabilities, such as restrictive covenants, will no longer be enforceable if they limit the ability of people with disabilities to live, like other citizens, where they wish.

Moreover, the Fair Housing Act prohibits practices with discriminatory *effects*, not just intentional discrimination. This means that apparently neutral regulations, such as restrictions on housing for unrelated adults, are unlawful if they have the effect of limiting housing opportunities for people with disabilities.

This memorandum offers an overview of the act and the regulations published in the Federal Register on January 23, 1989 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Because HUD lacks enforcement authority with respect to local land-use law (the Department of Justice has that authority), it did not issue regulations specific to zoning.¹ Nevertheless the Fair Housing Amendments Act, its legislative history and many of the general regulations HUD did issue shed considerable light on the rules that will apply to land-use questions.

The Scope of the Fair Housing Amendments Act for People With Disabilities

The purpose of the disability-related provisions of the Fair Housing Amendments Act is to permit people with disabilities to live where they wish, irrespective of the views, prejudices and desires of neighbors, governments or the real estate industry.

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The act makes it unlawful to discriminate "in the sale or rental, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any buyer or renter" because the person seeking housing has a handicap, is providing housing for other people with handicaps or is associated with people with handicaps.²

Second, the act prohibits discrimination in "the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with such dwelling" because of handicap.³

Third, discrimination includes "a refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices and services, when such accommodations are necessary to afford such person *equal opportunity* to use and enjoy a dwelling."⁴

The regulations state that the act's fundamental purpose is to prohibit practices that "restrict the choices" of people with disabilities to live where they wish or that "discourage or obstruct [those] choices in a community, neighborhood or development."⁵ The general rule is that any conduct relating to the provision of housing that makes it unavailable on account of handicap is unlawful.⁶

The legislative history makes clear that the act's prohibitions apply to local government land-use decisions. As quoted in HUD's discussion of the regulations:

The Act is intended to prohibit the application of restrictive covenants, and conditional or special use permits that have the effect of limiting the ability of such individuals to live in the residence of their choice in the community.⁷

The key in deciding whether a particular regulation of land use is discriminatory is whether the same rules are applied to families of similar size.⁸

Questions and Answers About How the Law Applies to Land-Use Regulations

1. Are dispersion requirements for group homes permitted?

Dispersion requirements (such as rules specifying the distance required between group homes) and concentration limitations (such as restrictions on the number of group homes per square mile) are clearly prohibited under the law because their effect is to make dwellings of choice unavailable to handicapped people.

The HUD rules also render even informal dispersion rules and anti-concentration practices unlawful. For example, the regulations prohibit the following: discouraging a person with a handicap from purchasing or renting a dwelling "in a community, neighborhood or development;"⁹ "communicating" that the person

"would not be comfortable or compatible with existing residents of a community, neighborhood or development,"¹⁰ or "assigning any person to a particular section of a community, neighborhood or development."¹¹

2. May group homes be concentrated -- or, conversely, prohibited or restricted -- in certain neighborhoods or zoning districts?

No, for the reasons just stated: the act prohibits restrictions on choice and specifically disallows assignment to a particular area.

Further, any practices that "tend to perpetuate segregated housing patterns" among people with handicaps are unlawful.¹² This provision affects providers of residential services as well as regulators of land use by prohibiting "ghettos" of people with disabilities.

3. May views expressed by neighbors or members of civic associations influence a group-home siting decision?

No. The act makes irrelevant any expressions of discomfort or opinions by neighborhood residents that people with disabilities are incompatible with other residents of the neighborhood.¹³ Just as neighbors' prejudice against members of racial minorities or religious groups cannot be used to exclude them, negative attitudes on the part of neighbors may not be invoked to keep out people with disabilities. This means that some of the arguments commonly used to oppose group homes, such as assertions that property values will decline or that group homes are incompatible with neighborhood character, are evidence of discrimination rather than a basis to keep group homes out of a neighborhood.

4. Can a local government limit the number of unrelated persons with disabilities living in a group home?

No. Rules prohibiting unrelated people (or more than a certain number of unrelated people) from living in a household may appear neutral. But if they have the effect of limiting the housing opportunities of people with disabilities, such rules are unlawful. Such rules might be valid when applied to college students, for example, but not when it has the effect of excluding people with disabilities.

Restrictions on the number of unrelated persons living in a household may also run afoul of the act's requirement of reasonable accommodation. That requirement means that otherwise-legitimate rules cannot be used to exclude a person with a disability if they prevent that person from an "equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling."¹⁴ The regulations offer the example of a blind person who requires a guide dog: As a reasonable accommodation, an apartment building cannot require the blind person to comply with its otherwise-valid rule prohibiting pets.¹⁵

Similarly, if, as a practical matter, the only way certain people with disabilities can live in a community is to share a residence with other, unrelated people, the reasonable-accommodation requirement prevents enforcement of a rule prohibiting occupancy by unrelated persons.

A local government may have occupancy rules requiring a specific number of square feet per resident. If applied equally to families and to unrelated people with disabilities, such a rule would be valid. Similarly, a local government can restrict the number of residents per dwelling (regardless of square footage) in certain neighborhoods. But it could not apply a different rule to people with disabilities than to families.

5. Does the presence of staff in a group home make any difference?

No. The choices of disabled people in the dwelling are protected, so it makes no difference who else lives in the house.

The approach of the Fair Housing Amendments Act thus differs from that taken by many state legislatures and some court decisions handed down before passage of the act, which have considered some group homes to represent "families" and others (such as those with staff) to be non-families. Under this interpretation, the non-families could be denied the opportunity to live in particular areas. Under the Fair Housing Amendments Act, by contrast, the right belongs to the persons with disabilities, and they may form whatever living arrangements they wish.

Further, staff presence has to be viewed in the context of the requirement of reasonable accommodation, discussed above. If people with mental disabilities require paid staff to live in a dwelling, that reasonable accommodation must be made.

6. May local governments require special or conditional use permits for group homes or other forms of housing for people with disabilities?

Local governments may not require such permits unless they are required of other dwellings of similar size, such as those occupied by families. The general rule of non-discrimination applies: If a family of six would not have to obtain a special use permit to occupy a particular dwelling, a group home for six people with disabilities may not be required to obtain one. Again, the relevant comparison is to families, not to unrelated persons.

On the other hand, if a special use permit is required for apartment construction in a particular zone, the fact that people who would live in the apartment have disabilities would not exempt them (or the builder) from the requirement.

7. Are restrictive covenants that prevent people with disabilities from living together valid?

No. The covenant would "discourage or obstruct choices in a community, neighborhood or development."¹⁶ The enforcement of covenants that preclude occupancy of a dwelling by people with disabilities is specifically identified in the regulations as a discriminatory housing practice;¹⁷ indeed, even the representation that such covenants would prohibit the transaction is a discriminatory housing practice.¹⁸

The response to question 4 about rules that restrict residency to single-family use applies here as well: If the effect of an apparently neutral rule (e.g. the exclusion of non-families) prevents unrelated people with disabilities from living together in the subdivision, the covenant is unlawful as applied to those people.

8. Are any exclusions of people with mental disabilities permitted?

The act does not protect people who currently engage in unlawful use of controlled substances.¹⁹ People in a treatment program for drug abuse are covered, however.²⁰

The act permits exclusion of persons whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others.²¹ However, the law does not permit inquiries about possible violent behavior of people with mental disabilities unless "these inquiries are made of all applicants, whether or not they have handicaps."²²

In the context of land-use and zoning decisions, this provision means that local zoning authorities may not hold hearings on the behavior of potential residents of a group home unless the same procedures are required for other potential residents of the community. Because no communities in fact require families and others to be scrutinized before being allowed to move in, zoning authorities may not make such inquiries of future group-home residents. This is consistent with the Fair Housing Amendments Act requirement that local land-use planning agencies apply the same requirements to families as they do to group home residents.

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February 16, 1989

Notes

1. 54 Fed. Reg. 3246.
2. Fair Housing Act Section 804(f)(1).
3. Fair Housing Act Section 804(f)(2).
4. Fair Housing Act Section 804(f)(3)(B).
5. 24 CFR 100.70(a). All Code of Federal Regulations citations are found in the Federal Register for January 23.
6. 24 CFR 100.50(b); 24 CFR 100.70(b).
7. 54 Fed. Reg. 3246, citing House of Representatives Report No. 100-711, 100th Congress, 2d Session at page 24.
8. House Report at 24. The Act specifically permits the imposition of occupancy limits.
9. 24 CFR 100.70(c)(1).
10. 24 CFR 100.70(c)(3).
11. 24 CFR 100.70(c)(4).
12. 24 CFR 100.70(a).
13. See note 10.
14. See note 4.
15. 24 CFR 100.204(b)(example 1).
16. 24 CFR 100.70(b).
17. 24 CFR 100.80(b)(3).
18. 24 CFR 100.80(b)(2).
19. 24 CFR 100.201(a)(2).
20. House Report at page 22.
21. 24 CFR 100.202(d).
22. 24 CFR 100.202(c)

Oxford Houses

"Good Neighbors in Good Neighborhoods"

A Pictorial Look

At

The First Eighteen Oxford Houses

Oxford House, Inc.

11317 Beach Mill Road

P.O. Box 994

Great Falls, Virginia 22066

Telephone (703) 444-6488 • Fax (703) 444-6089 • Hotline (800) 344-2509

Oxford Houses

Good Neighbors in Good Neighborhoods

At the end of its first thirteen years Oxford House, Inc. has twenty-five individual houses in the Washington, D.C. area, two houses in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and one house in Malden, Massachusetts. This pictorial presentation of the first 18 Oxford Houses houses was published to coincide with the signing the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. That law provided the framework for sharing the Oxford House concept and system with recovering individuals throughout the nation. Soon hundreds of communities will learn that residents of Oxford Houses are in fact good neighbors in good neighborhoods.

While a picture may be worth a thousand words, the pictures alone tell only part of the Oxford House story. Individuals recovering from addiction to alcohol and drugs can help themselves recover--both Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous proved that long ago. Oxford House expands that self-help concept of twelve recovery steps, fellowship and meetings to living together in an alcohol and drug free environment twenty four hours a day--for as long as it takes for an individual to feel comfortable without drinking alcohol or using drugs.

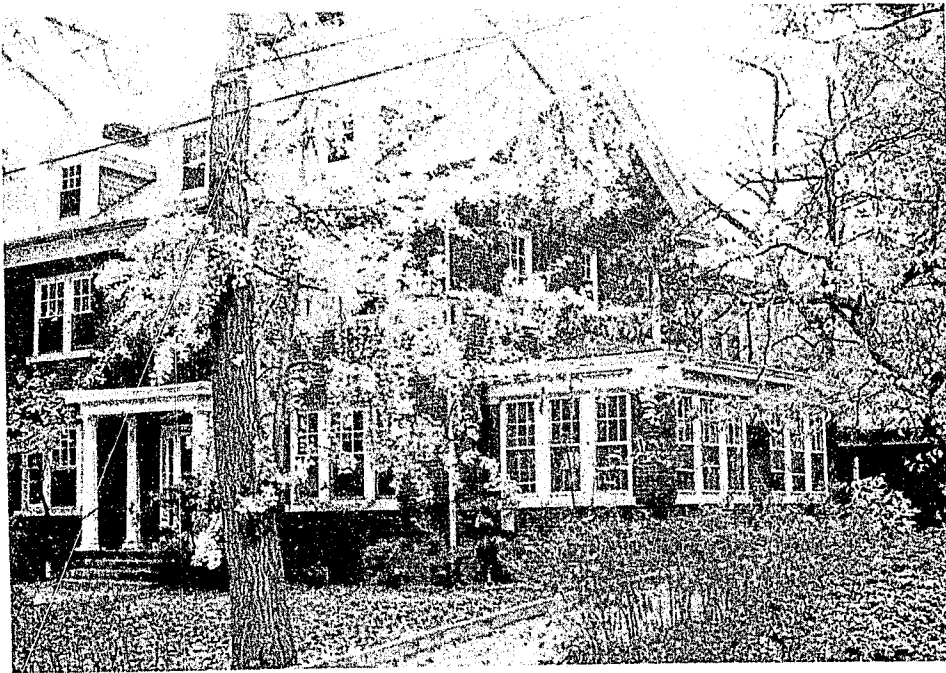
The key to the success of the Oxford House recovery houses is that individuals can stay as long as they do not drink alcohol or use drugs and pay their rent. It is as simple as that and it works. The choice to stay or the choice to leave is an individual choice -- not an arbitrary time limit established by the need to provide a bed to a newcomer because it is a public facility or anything else. Oxford House recognizes a very simple truth--individuals are not all the same. Some individuals recovering from addiction will master the lifestyle of comfortable living without the use of alcohol or drugs quickly; others will take a longer period of time. All recovering individuals need the support of AA or NA but some individuals need more support -- particularly during the early stage of recovery.

Oxford Houses are democratically self-run and self-supported. Together recovering individuals help each other to learn to live without triggering their addiction to either alcohol or drugs. Self-support is an important element to recovery. Oxford House offers self-support which builds the self-respect needed to live comfortably without ever using alcohol or drugs.

All that is asked of a community is to let Oxford Houses be good neighbors in good neighborhoods.

Oxford House, Inc.

A tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation
Telephone (301) 587-2916 Fax (301) 589-0302



Oxford House Huntington

Founded in 1977 and located in Northwest Washington (just off Connecticut Avenue), it is residence for 11 men. It has five bedrooms, four full baths, one half bath, five refrigerators. Each member pays \$65 per week.



Oxford House Northampton

Founded in 1977 and located in Northwest Washington (near Chevy Chase Circle), it is residence for 13 men. It has nine bedrooms, three full baths, two half baths, two refrigerators. Each member pays \$55 per week.

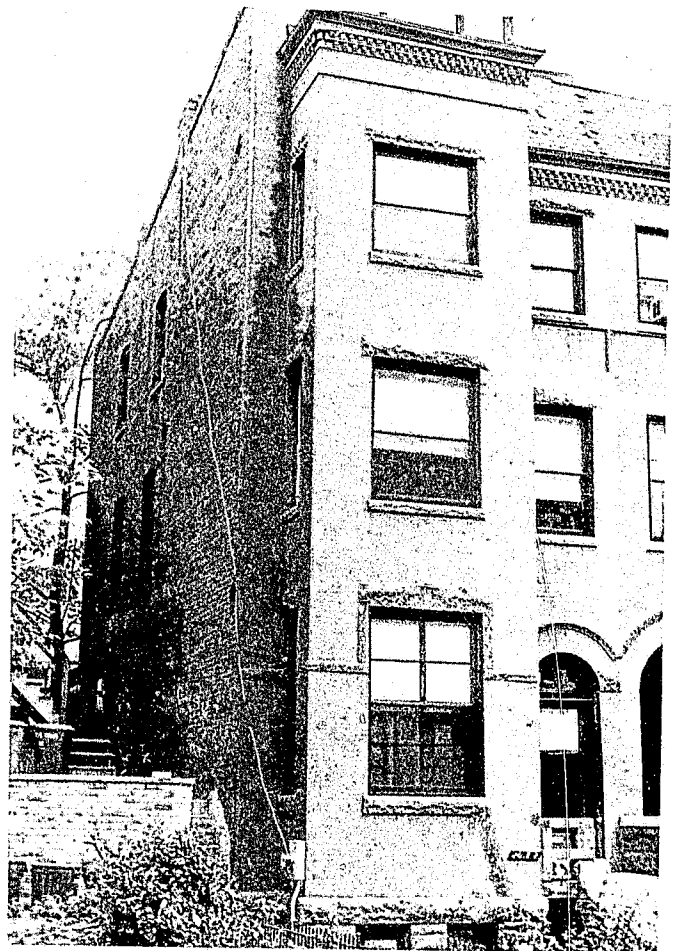


Oxford House Capitol Hill I

Founded in 1978 and located on Capitol Hill it is residence for 8 men. It has five bedrooms, two full baths, one half bath, two refrigerators. Each member pays \$50 per week.

Oxford House Nineteenth Street

Founded in 1976 in another house it has moved twice to the present location in Northwest Washington (near Dupont Circle) and is residence for 15 men. It has six bedrooms plus a basement that sleeps three, three full baths, one half bath, four refrigerators. Each member pays \$50 per week.





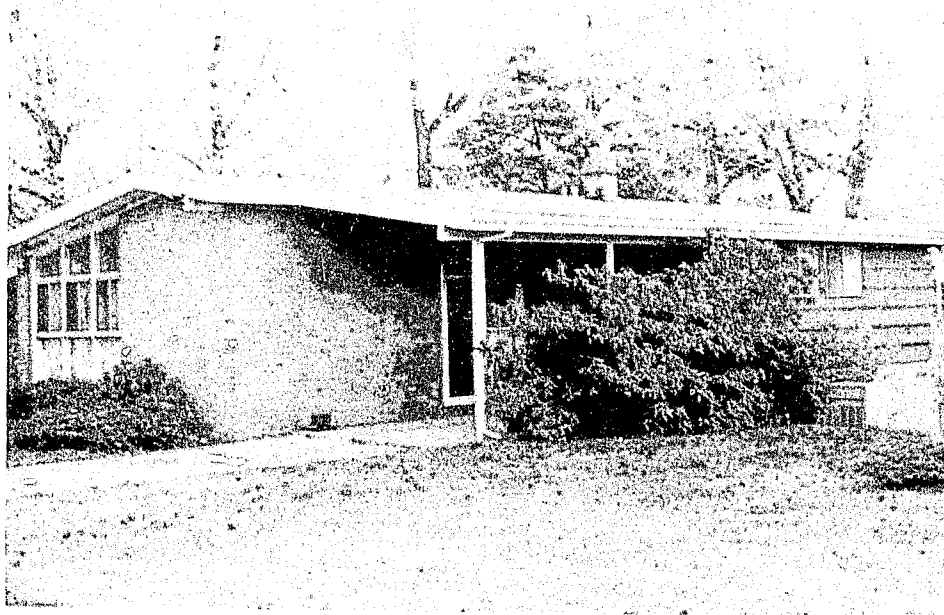
Oxford House Kalorama

Founded in 1981 and located in Northwest Washington (just off Connecticut Avenue near Dupont Circle) it is residence to 15 men. It has eight bedrooms, three full baths, one half bath and three refrigerators. Each member pays \$60 per week.



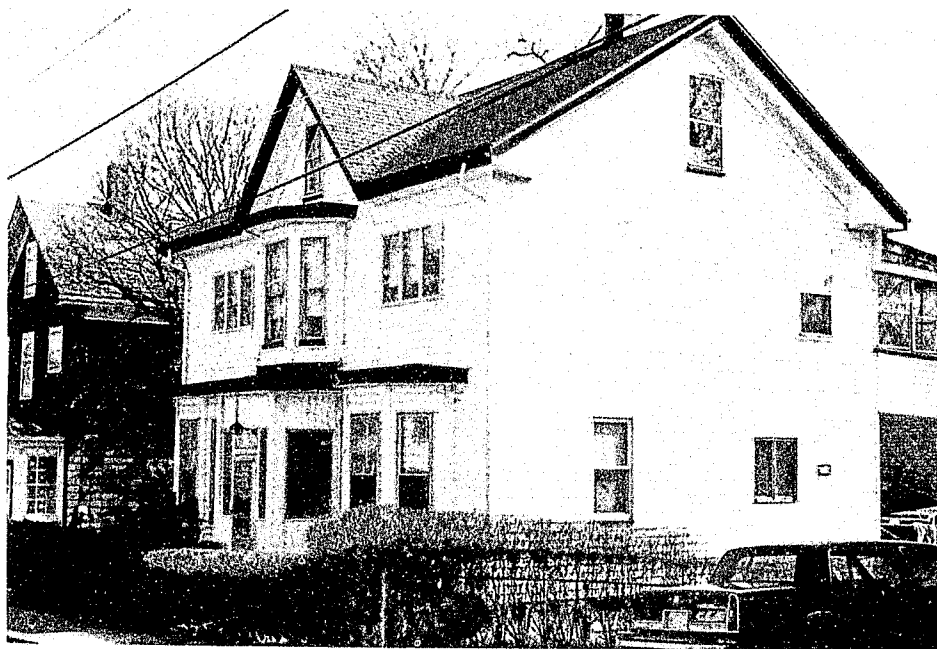
Oxford House Garrison

Founded in 1980 and located in Northwest Washington (at Friendship Heights), it is residence for 9 men. It has six bedrooms, three full baths, one half bath, two refrigerators. Each member pays \$60 (\$70 single) per week.



Oxford House Silver Spring

Founded in 1981 in another house it has moved once to its present location in the Kemp Mill area of Silver Spring, Maryland. It is residence to 6 women. It has six bedrooms, two full baths, one half bath and two refrigerators. Each member pays \$58 per week



Oxford House - Malden

Founded in 1989, it is the first Oxford House in Massachusetts. It has four bedrooms and 1 1/2 baths and is residence to eight men. Each member pays \$70 per week.



Oxford House P Street

Founded in 1987 and located in Northwest Washington (just off Foxhall Road), it is residence to 6 men. It has four bedrooms, two baths and one half bath and two refrigerators. Each member pays \$70 per week.



Oxford House Bethlehem

Founded in 1987 and located in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (several blocks from Lehigh University), it is residence to 12 men. It has six bedrooms, two baths, two refrigerators. Each member pays \$55 per week.

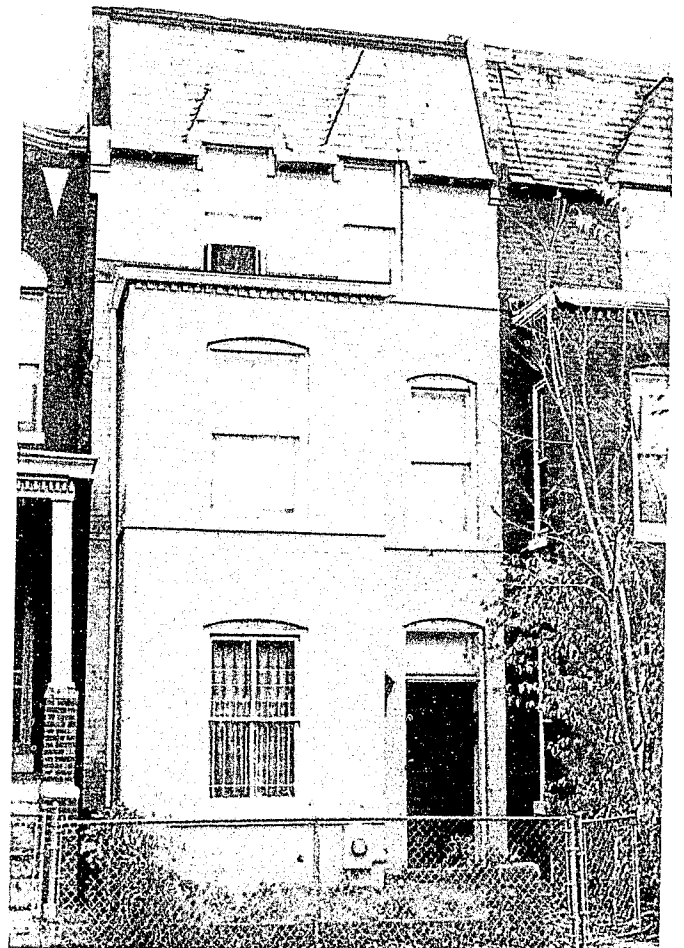


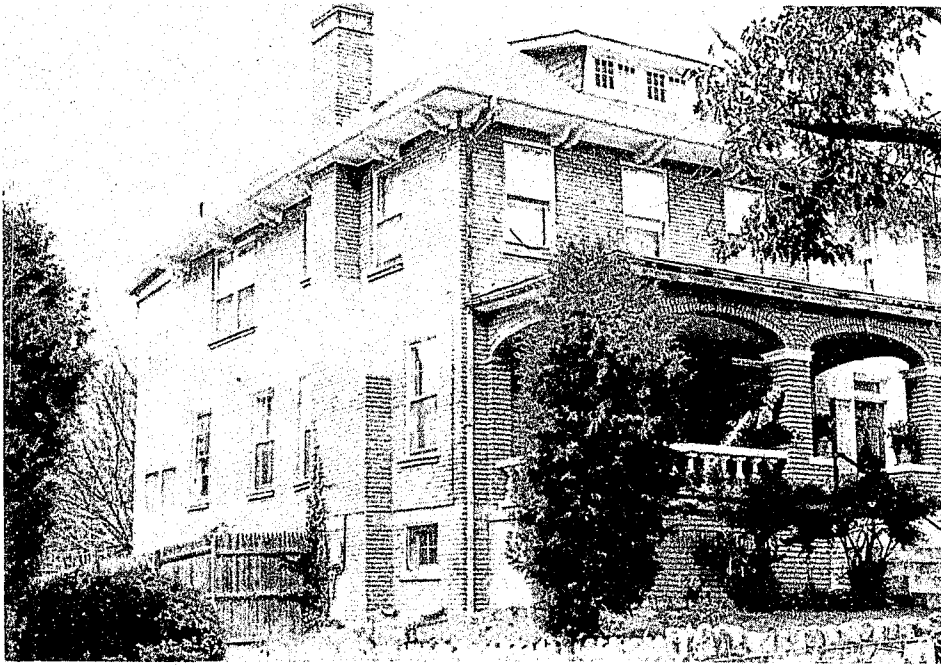
Oxford House Logan Circle

Founded in 1987 and located in Northwest Washington at Logan Circle, it is residence to 11 men. It has nine bedrooms, ten baths, and two refrigerators. Each member pays \$68 a week.

Oxford House Capitol Hill II

Founded in 1987 and located in Northeast Washington (near Capitol Hill), it is residence to 6 men. It has six bedrooms, two full baths, one refrigerator. Each member pays \$50 per week.





Oxford House Bellevue Terrace

Founded in 1988 and located in Northwest Washington (Cleveland Park area), it is residence to 11 men. It has seven bedrooms, four baths and three refrigerators. Each member pays \$80 per week.

Oxford House Park Road I

Founded in 1988 and located in the downtown Washington just off Sixteenth Street, it is residence to 8 women. It has six bedrooms, three baths, a half bath and two refrigerators. Each member pay \$ 65 per week.





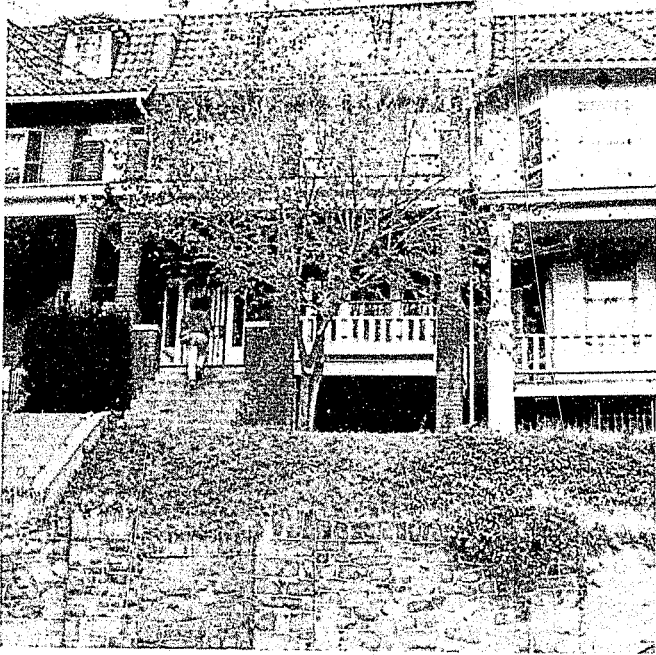
Oxford House Park Road II

Founded in 1988 and located in the downtown Washington area just two houses up the street from Oxford House Park Road I, it is residence to 12 women. It has eight bedrooms, three baths, a half bath and three refrigerators. Each member pays \$65 per week.



Oxford House Delafield

Founded in 1988 and located in Northwest Washington (Petworth area), it is residence to 12 men. It has six bedrooms, three baths, a half bath and two refrigerators. Each member pays \$60 per week.



Oxford House Adams Mill

Founded in 1988 and located in the Adams Morgan area of Washington (looking out over Rock Creek Park), it is residence to 14 men. It has ten bedrooms, three baths, a half bath and three refrigerators. Each member pays \$55 per week.

Oxford House T Street

Founded in 1988 and located in downtown Washington (just off Sixteenth Street), it is residence to 9 men. It has six bedrooms, two baths, a half bath and two refrigerators. Each member pays \$70 per week.



APPENDIX C
OXFORD HOUSE MANUAL

Oxford House Manual

**An Idea Based On a Sound System
For Recovering Alcoholics to Help Themselves**

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**HOUSING,  
FELLOWSHIP,  
SELF-RELIANCE,  
SELF-RESPECT,  
FOR RECOVERING INDIVIDUALS**

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Oxford House, Inc., is a non-profit corporation which will provide Charters, at a nominal charge, to recovering alcoholics who want to provide group housing for themselves.

Introduction

This is the first revision of the Oxford House Manual, which served hundreds of Oxford House members well for thirteen years. The term alcoholic is used throughout this manual, as it was in the original. It should be read with the recognition that many individuals have dual addictions to alcohol and drugs. There have been many recovering alcoholics in Oxford House who were also recovering from addiction to other drugs.

Whenever the masculine pronoun is used in this manual, it means the female pronoun as well.

On November 18, 1988 President Reagan signed P.L. 100-690, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, which establishes a nationwide program to encourage the mass replication of recovery houses based upon the Oxford House Concept. At the request of Congress Oxford House worked with them in crafting a simple but workable start-up loan program in each state.

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This revision or up-date is dedicated to Jim S., the first member voted into Oxford House. On August 19, 1987, Jim died -- at far too young an age but with over 12 years of remarkable sobriety. He touched hundreds of recovering alcoholics with his dedicated program of joyful sobriety and taught one and all that sobriety could be happiness, a good time, a full life and totally rewarding. For two and a half years he lived in Oxford House, keeping everyone's spirits up and proving that Oxford House worked, and then rejoined his wife and two children.

As a "graduate of Oxford House" Jim kept coming back to bring "newcomers" in and help "oldtimers" out. Jim taught us all that you don't need to drink to have a good time in an Oxford House. It is a very special fraternity.

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The Oxford House Story

In October, 1975, the first Oxford House was opened in Silver Spring, Maryland, by a group of recovering alcoholics who had been living in a county government-supported halfway house which was being closed. Each of them had been sober for but a short period of time when they learned that the halfway house was to be closed. Each of them was fearful that he would return to alcoholic drinking without the support of living in a group committed to staying sober and straight.

When the news reached them that the halfway house was going to be closed, their first reaction was one of anger, resentment and panic. They had known that the halfway house had a "six month rule" which required an individual to move out after six months to make room for a newcomer. As a matter of fact, during their tenure in the halfway house they had watched 13 men move out at the end of six months. Most of the 13 had returned to drinking within a month. That fact only added to the fears and insecurity they felt upon learning that the house they lived in would be closed and they all would have to move within thirty days.

A private individual, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, held the lease on the house the county was closing. Several of the men faced with eviction approached him to see if there was some way the county could be convinced to change its decision. He felt such a change of heart was impossible. It was a matter of economics. County halfway houses cost a lot of money to run. The county budget was tight and Alpha I, as the halfway house was named, would definitely be closed. He then asked if the men had given any thought to taking over the house themselves.

Over the next several days hope began to replace the despair shared by the men, but a number of obstacles stood between the idea of taking over the house themselves and the reality of being able to do it. Where would they get the money? All of them had drunk themselves out of good jobs and few of them had done more than day labor since getting sober. How could they pay for the rent, the utilities, the food and a counselor to manage a halfway house? Who could they find to run the house, even if they could come up with the money? Day and night they discussed the possibilities among themselves and went to a lot of AA meetings in order to get the advice of AA members. Time and again AA members gave them encouragement. "Just don't drink and pay the rent," they heard over and over again. "Keep it simple" and "Remember--a day at a time," were offered as advice almost as frequently.

Slowly an idea began to form that maybe it could be done. The first task involved studying the costs of the halfway house to determine how much money was

needed. The largest single cost was the paid manager or counselor attached to the house. Someone suggested maybe they could live without a paid manager-counselor. But who would be the supervisor or manager if they did not have a paid counselor who lived in the house? Of the men in the house to be closed only one had reached six months of sobriety.

The men decided that the cost of a manager-counselor was too great. If there was going to be any chance of maintaining a house on their own, a way would have to be found to learn how to stay sober and manage a house without a paid manager-counselor.

One man recalled that he had lived in a college fraternity with sixteen men and they had not had a paid manager. Of course there had been no requirement of not drinking in that house. As the men talked about the fraternity house concept, fear of being able to enforce sobriety without the presence of a paid authority figure became the heart of the matter. They had been without real responsibility for so long there was considerable doubt about whether or not they could act responsibly as a group.

As discussions centered around whether or not they could run a house themselves talk would inevitably drift into complaints about the halfway house way of life. There were a lot of rules. Lights out at eleven p.m. every night. Everybody up at six a.m. every morning. Breakfast at exactly seven a.m. Table setting, dish washing, vacuuming, trash removal, bed-making -- all specific assignments to be done at a specific time and in a particular way. Any suggested changes to the rigid routine were dismissed with a lecture and a warning to shape up or ship out. As much as the residents of the halfway house resented the arbitrary rules, the fear of having no place to live was even greater.

After days of discussions an organizational plan began to evolve which gave the founders of Oxford House the confidence they needed to give it a try. Their experiences in the halfway house--both positive and negative--helped them develop an organization to carry the responsibilities for which the manager-counselor had been solely responsible in the county halfway house.

On the positive side of the ledger of halfway house experience was the reinforcement of sobriety that was gained by knowing that immediate eviction followed taking the first drink. From the start the founders recognized that there had to be an absolute rule against any alcohol or drug use by members of the house. The problem for a self-run group house was how to develop procedures to make sure that any resident who drank or took drugs would be thrown out. It was finally decided that the only way it could be done was to call a meeting of the house members and discuss the situation. If a member had taken drugs or a drink there would have to be a vote to expel him from the house. If a majority of the members agreed that the member had in fact taken a drink or drugs, he was

automatically out.¹

Before the first relapse occurred there was considerable debate among the members about how one could tell if an individual has in fact returned to drinking or taking drugs. Some members thought that the house should purchase a breathalyzer to test everybody to guard against the "secret drinker" among us. Others suggested the election of an official "sniffer" (as a less expensive safeguard). New houses today will probably go through the same kinds of concern. The fact of the matter is that no member of a house is able to fool other members for very long. We are all alcoholics or drug addicts who have done anything to drink and/or take drugs. We really do know all the tricks of the trade and a relapse cannot be covered up for long.

Unfortunately relapses are a part of the disease of alcoholism and addiction. Some members of an Oxford House will return to their addiction. When they do it is important for the other members of the house to act promptly. The worse mistake any house can make is to ignore a relapse by any member. The relapse or slip endangers the sobriety of every other member of a house. Every Oxford House resident knows before he moves in that the use of alcohol or drugs results in getting kicked out. Oxford House members have the responsibility to use "tough love" and promptly expel the slipper--for his welfare, their own welfare and the welfare of the entire house.²

Once a member has been expelled from a house because he has returned to drinking or taking drugs he cannot be readmitted unless there is a clear demonstration that he has returned to solid sobriety. Each house develops certain rules of thumb for determining a return to solid sobriety. Some accept successful completion of a 28 day rehabilitation program as a return to solid sobriety. Most generally require at least a month of no drinking or taking of

¹ The first Oxford House tried a system which distinguished drinking or taking drugs in the house from drinking or taking drugs outside the house. In the former case, expulsion from the house was automatic; in the latter case, expulsion was likely; but if the membership felt it was warranted a member who had relapsed away from the house could be given probation. This was done in four cases and it did not work in any of them. In each case the member with the relapse had relapsed again within a period of a few days or weeks. Experience showed that probation did not work. Therefore any slip or relapse now results in automatic expulsion. The vote taken by the house membership is solely to judge if in fact a relapse has taken place.

² It is seldom easy to take action against the relapsing member but every Oxford House does. The first case is always the most difficult because members in the houses become friends and no one likes to have to throw a friend out. Nevertheless principles must come before personalities and the member who has relapsed must leave the house right away. Otherwise the sobriety of every member of the house is threatened. More importantly, the good reputation of Oxford House is threatened. The first Oxford House used to be the object of bets by outsiders about how soon it might fail. There was a genuine belief by many that a group house of recovering alcoholics and addicts could not work without a manager-counselor to enforce the edict against drinking or taking drugs. Those doubters all lost their bets because the members of Oxford House proved that they could act responsibly. The first responsibility of any Oxford House is to enforce sobriety.

drugs and regular attendance at AA as a minimum requirement for reacceptance into an Oxford House.³

The founders of Oxford House developed a democratic way of operation. They had to -- they could not afford to pay a house manager or supervisor to take responsibility for them. The early history of Oxford House showed that the Oxford House residents could run a house on their own. Today Oxford House is still self-run and it still works. Every member of the house has to accept responsibility because each member of a house has an equal voice in the way the house is run. Just like a college fraternity there are elected officers, democratic procedures, an operational manual, and traditions to give those living in the house guidance, support and confidence. The ultimate responsibility, however, for individual recovery and the protection of Oxford House as an alcohol and drug free living place rests with each individual member.

Within six months of its beginning, the first Oxford House had help finance and start the second Oxford House. Soon those two houses started a third and the three houses then started a fourth. Over its first thirteen years Oxford House has grown from one house to more than twenty houses and the expansion of a good idea has just begun.

In October 1987 an Oxford House for men was started in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania far away from the cluster of houses in the Washington, D.C. area. It worked and the eleven men in that Oxford House are following the pattern begun in the Washington area thirteen years ago by looking for another house to rent to start a second house in the Bethlehem area.

Early in 1988 all the members of the individual Oxford Houses decided to establish a full-time Oxford House Service Board to provide other individuals recovering from alcoholism or drug addiction the technical assistance necessary for them to start Oxford Houses in their communities. There is a strong belief that Oxford House will work anywhere. As Oxford Houses open around the country, the first Oxford House in a particular region will follow the tradition set by the original Oxford House of helping other houses get started. Within a short period of time clusters of Oxford Houses are likely to develop around any Oxford House new to a community or region.

Each Oxford House has its own history but all Oxford Houses share a common history of operating in a democratic fashion on a self-supporting basis. That common history is the key to why Oxford House works. The System of

³ Once a geographic area has opened several Oxford Houses each house keeps in touch with the other houses so that a relapsing member does not simply move from one house to another. On the other hand, once a relapsing member regains sobriety, it may be advisable for him to "start over" in another house in the area if it has room. The group conscience of those for whom Oxford House is working generally has no trouble in guiding the recovered relapser into the house which can give the most support.

Operations and the Oxford House Traditions contain the blueprint for any Oxford House to work well by following a tried and true path for success.

The System of Operations and Oxford House Traditions which follow are taken directly from the original Oxford House Manual[©]. With very minor changes, duly noted through footnotes, the original manual has worked well.

The key Oxford House organization is listed below. Direct any correspondence or telephone calls to it. Its purpose is to be of help.

Oxford House, Inc.*
9312 Colesville Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
Telephone 1-(301) 587-2916
Toll Free 1-(800) 344-2509

* Oxford House is incorporated in Delaware and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

The following suggested forms to help an individual Oxford House group function as an orderly and financially responsible family are printed at the end of this manual:

Oxford System Checklist

A simple checklist used by some Oxford Houses to remind members of the Oxford House family about the basic steps that have to be taken to make the house run on a financially sound basis.

Weekly Financial Report

A simple form to report who has paid their share of expenses, a list of expenses paid during the previous week, the amount of funds available to the house and a list of regular or unexpected expenses coming up within the next few weeks.

Weekly Meeting Report

A simple form to record the minutes of the weekly meeting of Oxford House family members so that the House has an on-going record of the democratic decisions made by the group.

Membership Application

The standard form used by Oxford Houses to help evaluate the eligibility of new family members applying for membership in an Oxford House.

Oxford House System of Operations

There is a frequent saying among Oxford House Members that "Oxford House has no rules except 'Don't drink'." For the most part, that saying is true. However, it does overstate the facts.

Unfortunately, it is impossible for any organization to function without having some system or procedures. The basic rule for all Oxford Houses is that they *must operate on a democratic basis*. Each member of the House has one vote. A majority rules except in the case of accepting a new recovering alcoholic for membership, in which case 80% of the current membership must vote its approval.

The discussion which follows spells out the Oxford House System of Operations. It draws on the experience of the existing Oxford Houses and tells any recovering alcoholic who is interested (1) how to start an Oxford House; (2) how to make an Oxford House run smoothly; (3) how to manage money in an Oxford House.

Oxford House, Inc., is the umbrella organization for all Oxford Houses. Any group of recovering alcoholics which wants to form an Oxford House must obtain a charter from Oxford House, Inc. The charter confers on the Oxford House the benefits of being part of a non-profit corporation which can offer the experience and guidance necessary for making an Oxford House work.

Any two or more recovering alcoholics can apply for an Oxford House charter. Oxford House, Inc., has no hard and fast rules as to the length of sobriety required of recovering alcoholics who want to charter a new house. Charter applications are accepted by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis. As a general rule, however, several members of any charter group should have several months of solid sobriety.

Obtaining a Charter

Two or more recovering alcoholics can apply for a charter from Oxford House, Inc., by completing an application for a charter⁴ or simply writing a letter containing the pertinent information to Oxford House, Inc., P.O. Box 994, Great Falls, Virginia 22066. Pertinent information would include answers to the following questions:

1. Names of proposed charter members.
2. Length of sobriety for each proposed charter member.

⁴ One can usually get a form to apply for a charter from an existing Oxford House or by writing to Oxford House, Inc.

3. The plans that the proposed charter group has for renting or leasing a house.
4. The number of beds contemplated for use in the proposed new Oxford House.
5. The anticipated charge per person per week which would be needed to make the House self-supporting.

Once the Board of Directors of Oxford House, Inc., has reviewed the application or letter from the prospective charter members, it will either issue a charter or suggest additional steps for the prospective members to take in order to obtain a charter. A charter will be issued if, in the judgement of the Board of Directors, the proposed new Oxford House has a reasonable chance of success.

In some cases the Board of Directors will issue a charter prior to the actual acquisition of housing by the charter applicants. In such a case, the charter will be issued upon the condition that the charter members obtain a suitable house within a specific period of time.⁵

Obtaining a House

The Oxford House philosophy is one that relies on expanding capacity rather than limiting the length of time that a member can live in a House. To provide sufficient space for all recovering alcoholics who want to live in an Oxford House, it has been the custom for an established Oxford House to look for an additional house once it has become full and has applications which it is unable to accept because of lack of room.

The size, location and cost of a suitable house to begin an Oxford House depends more on what is available than any specific criteria. The charter members who are looking for a suitable house should make certain that any prospective house can be occupied without violating local zoning or health and safety laws. This does not mean that an Oxford House should not be considered simply as residential property. In practice Oxford House is no different from an ordinary family-- except no one in an Oxford House drinks alcohol or takes mood changing drugs.

⁵ This situation is more likely to occur when Oxford House is new to a geographic area. In those geographic areas where there is already an Oxford House, those wanting to start a new House are more likely to find the available house first and then apply for a Charter. Often a new House in that situation is formed by some members of the existing House deciding that they want to become the core member of a new House so that the availability of Oxford House living is expanded. This usually happens when the number of applicants for living in the existing House is far greater than the number of beds available.

As a matter of fact, most jurisdictions in the country do not have specific ordinances which relate directly to an Oxford House-type situation. Most group housing ordinances, if they exist at all, are geared to highly institutionalized situations. Most commercial zoning ordinances, i.e., rooming houses, apartments, or hotels or motels, are inappropriate for the Oxford House situation.

If the charter members have any doubt as to how their particular jurisdiction will view an Oxford House, they should face the matter directly and clear their occupancy with the local zoning authorities. Oxford House, Inc. , is willing to provide any assistance it can for the purpose of persuading local authorities to treat Oxford House the same as it would treat any other residential property within its jurisdiction.⁶

Common sense should be used in selecting any house which is to be used as an Oxford House. It should have adequate plumbing, adequate kitchen facilities, adequate laundry facilities, a sufficient number of bedrooms, and a pleasant common living space. In addition, the area should be surveyed to determine to what extent parking of automobiles may cause a problem.

The amount of rent that a new group can afford depends on the number of beds which the house can hold. There is nothing wrong with putting more than one bed in larger rooms. New members moving into a house can be made to feel at home more easily if they share a room. Most Houses use a system of seniority for bed selection. "Oldtimers" generally move into single rooms, if any are available, as new members move into the house. The single rooms are usually the smaller rooms in a house.

There are two reasons Oxford House encourages more than one to a room. First, newcomers do better with a roommate. Loneliness continues to be a threat to sobriety and loneliness can be a problem for the newcomer adjusting to a new place to live. Second, the economics of an Oxford House is directly affected by the number of people living in a House. The more people who live in a House the less each member has to pay for the House to be self supporting.

The size of the house has a direct relationship to the amount of rent a new group can afford to pay. In most areas the monthly rent will be the largest single cost for the members of a House to meet. For example, the very first Oxford House (Oxford House-Silver Spring)⁷, held 13 members. The monthly rent was

⁶ In Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for example, Oxford House received a ruling from the Chief of the Bureau of Inspections that it is within the definition of "Family" as defined in the City Zoning Code. As a practical matter most jurisdictions so appreciate the useful service provided by an Oxford House that it is considered to have a "family" classification.

⁷ Oxford House-Silver Spring was opened October 25, 1975 and continued to be an Oxford House until the end of 1984. It was located at 1219 Fidler Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland. The building was razed to make way for another building in 1986.

\$700; utilities ran about \$300 a month; staples about \$250 a month.⁸ The charge per member had been set at \$30 a week. Since the House quickly became full and stayed full income exceeded expenses.⁹ As a matter of fact after six months of operation the House had nearly \$1,200 in the bank. It used that money to start a new Oxford House so that some of the recovering alcoholics who had applied to live in an Oxford House could live in one. Even today, with a number of Oxford Houses in the Washington, D.C. area, each House has a backlog of applications.

As a general rule, it is easy to acquire furniture for a new House at little or no expense. Sometimes, however, it may be difficult to get beds and chests of drawers. Since beds produce the money which makes an Oxford House self-sufficient, members in a new house might want to buy twin-size mattress and box springs sets. New twin-size mattresses and box springs cost between \$90 to \$120 per unit. Thrift stores, Good Will or Salvation Army often have chests of drawers at a reasonable price. The first and most effective way to get furniture, however, is to ask for it from AA members. Often they are up-grading their own furnishing and are pleased to give their old furniture to an Oxford House.

Other start-up costs often include a month's rent in advance and a security deposit equal to one month's rent. New Houses often get a loan from AA members or other Oxford Houses in order to meet this expense. Whenever a loan is obtained the members of the new House should agree to pay it back according to a definite schedule. The good name of Oxford House is at stake whenever any House has a loan outstanding. Therefore it is important to make payments on the loan on a regular basis.

Membership

The charter members of a new Oxford House constitute a basic core of membership for the House. Once the House has started, the charter members will want to bring in enough new members to fill all available beds. The higher the occupancy rate, the lower the rent which must be paid by each individual Oxford House member.

One of the requirements under an Oxford House charter is that new members must be approved by 80% of the existing members in a particular House. An approval by 80% of the existing members is required because it is extremely important that members living in an Oxford House feel comfortable

⁸ The first Oxford House and most subsequent Houses have bought paper products, soap powder, milk, potatoes, spices, flour, coffee, bread, eggs and bacon on a group basis. Individual members get their own meals-- either individually or as groups-- but use the "staples" as needed. By 1988 the nature of group purchases had changed somewhat -- bacon, eggs and potatoes are generally purchased by individuals rather than the house as a group.

⁹ By late Spring a surplus of nearly \$1,200 was in the House treasury. The members met to decide whether to lower their weekly payment or to use the surplus to open a new House. They chose to open a new House and Oxford House Washington was opened in May 1976.

with any newcomer. As a practical matter existing Oxford Houses have denied membership to very few individuals. Most members of Oxford House keep their memory green and few applicants are excluded from membership. Those who are excluded are generally excluded because there are no beds available. A waiting list is maintained, but it is of little value after a period of time because when a person needs a room, he must get one immediately. On the other hand, the waiting list can become a useful resource for finding new members to help form another House.¹⁰ The waiting list also is a ready resource for filling vacancies as members move out to live elsewhere in the community or are evicted because of a relapse to drinking or taking drugs.

Oxford House works well for men and for women. However, it has been the experience of Oxford House that it does not work well with men and women in the same House.¹¹ Relationships are bound to develop and will unnecessarily complicate the comfortable operation of an Oxford House.

When a new Oxford House is established, the charter members of the House should make themselves known to quarterway houses, halfway houses, detoxification units, rehabilitation facilities and AA groups within the area. Included among those items which should be stressed are that the House is democratically run; it is self-supporting; drinking or the taking of drugs is not permitted; and that both the new and not-so-new recovering alcoholics are welcome to come and live at the House as long as they do not drink or take drugs and pay their rent. Oxford House is not in competition with any of these groups. It is a resource for them to use in the common goal of helping the alcoholic avoid relapses. Many of these groups will become supporters of Oxford House and will refer new members to the House. Remember to explain that a new member must file an application and be approved by a 80% of those living in Oxford House and that there may be a waiting list for available beds.

Once an Oxford House has been established for a few months, applications for membership will exceed the space available. Consideration should then be given to opening a new Oxford House using some of the current members as a

¹⁰ Once an Oxford House has been established for a few months, there will soon be more applicants than there are beds available. The situation soon causes the members living in the House to start looking for an additional house to rent.

¹¹ In 1978 Oxford House opened a House intended for women but started with a core group of four men from an existing Oxford House. After eight women moved into the House, the four men moved out with the expectation that their spaces would be filled by the women accepting four additional women. Instead the women accepted four additional men as replacements and the House began to have problems. A number of relationships evolved between the men and women and soon a number of the members had returned to drinking. Oxford House, Inc. closed the House and reopened it as a House for men. It was clear then and continues to be clear today that men and women living in the same house operating under the self-support system of Oxford House creates an unnecessary additional stress to group living. All women Oxford Houses work well; all men Oxford Houses work well; Houses with both men and women do not work and as a general rule will not be granted a charter by Oxford House, Inc.

core group for the new House. Generally a few members in a House will begin thinking about opening another House in response to a House's inability to accept all the deserving applicants. They will discuss the matter at a House meeting and everyone will begin to look for a suitable additional house to rent. When such a house is found several existing members will volunteer to become the core group for a new House. The existing House will begin to figure out ways to come up with the necessary money for starting the new House and checks with applicants to see if they would be willing to live in the new House. This is the way that Oxford House is able to comfortably exist with the principle of letting members live in an Oxford House for as long as they want provided they do not drink or use drugs and pay their rent.

Rules

Alcoholics by nature seem to dislike rules. There is only one rule applicable to all Oxford Houses; i.e. membership is conditioned on not drinking. It is impossible for a house of recovering alcoholics to stay sober if even one person is permitted to drink or take drugs. The presence of a practicing alcoholic among those who are trying to stay sober invites other relapses. As a matter of self preservation it is necessary for the membership of an Oxford House to confront the relapsing member immediately. A meeting of the House should be held and if a majority of the members believe that a member is drinking or taking drugs that member should be asked to leave.

The rule relating to the use of alcohol or drugs grows out of common sense. That rule is the only rule considered mandatory once a group of recovering alcoholics has received an Oxford House charter. Other rules will tend to evolve from the membership of the House itself. Those rules should come into being only if they are absolutely necessary. The fewer the rules, the more likely it will be that a house will be successful. Different Houses will tend to have different rules. For example, one Oxford House has a rule that requires unanimous consent before any pet can be brought onto the premises. Another Oxford House has two cats and a dog and would probably require unanimous consent before either cat or the dog could be evicted.

In many alcoholic rehabilitation units, there are rules covering a multitude of activities. Those rules include curfew hours; clean-up details; mandatory attendance at AA meetings; and other rules almost inherent in institutional living. Oxford House is not an institution. It is more analagous to a family situation or a college fraternity or sorority. There should be no rules with respect to curfew or mandatory attendance at AA meeting.¹² Certain rules

¹² This is not to suggest that attendance at AA meeting is not important. It is. However, AA is a program of attraction and members in an Oxford House will go to a lot of AA meetings. The non-meeting goer will soon go along and began to enjoy AA and become an active member of the group. If the non-meeting goer is forced to go to AA as a condition for living in an Oxford House, he or she will

may be required to assure an equitable distribution of the work in keeping the house clean and at times there may be the need for rules to keep some individuals from disrupting other individuals.

Since the success of an Oxford House depends on having enough income to meet expenses, it is important that members pay rent in a timely manner. Rules may be required which force the eviction of members who do not keep their rent up to date. All members should be encouraged to pay their rent at least one week in advance.

Officers

For an Oxford House to run successfully on a democratic basis, it must have certain elected officers. It is part of the Oxford House tradition to make sure that officers do not become so entrenched that other members of the house do not have an equal voice in its management. Therefore, it is an Oxford House tradition that no officer shall serve longer than six months in the same office for one continuous period of time.¹³ All officers are but trusted servants of the entire membership. The number of officers may vary from House to House but all Houses generally have the following elected officers:

- President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Comptroller

The election of both a treasurer and comptroller emphasizes the importance each Oxford House places on money management. The two officers are able to divide rent collection and help each other with the payment of bills. Some Houses elect a "Coordinator" to help schedule work details to keep the house clean.

The election of officers is necessary because they provide the leadership for the House to work well. The officers can serve continuously for only six months in any particular office, i.e. after an intervening six month period an individual can be re-elected to an office in which he or she has already served. The duties of the various officers are to keep Oxford House running smoothly, conduct regular meetings of the House membership, assure that the Oxford House Traditions are followed, and keep the finances of the House in good order.

resent the requirement and miss the genuine support for living a sober and straight life that AA has to offer.

A survey of Oxford House membership taken in the Spring of 1988 showed that Oxford House residents attend an average of six AA or NA meeting a week.

¹³ See Tradition Two.

Meetings

It is important to have a House meeting at least once a week. After some experimenting, an Oxford House will find the particular hour or half-hour which is the most convenient for most of its members. A meeting should be used to:

- report on the current financial status of the House;
- consider new applications for membership;
- resolve any problem affecting members in the House;
- resolve general complaints about maintenance of the house; and
- consider proposals or projects to be undertaken by the House.

A special meeting should be called, as quickly as possible, whenever there is any suspicion that a member is drinking or taking drugs. Such meetings are the most difficult of any held in an Oxford House. Some Houses have decided to use three of the elected officers as a screening committee for determining if an individual has violated the rule against drinking or taking drugs. In such cases, the screening committee makes its report to the full membership of the House for their consideration. The individual suspected of violating the rule against drinking or taking drugs should be directly confronted with the facts leading to the suspicion. The membership of the House then must vote on whether or not the facts support the conclusion that a member has violated the rule.

The decision by the House membership should be viewed simply as a factual determination. If a majority of the House membership attending the special meeting believes that the individual did in fact drink or take drugs, expulsion of that member is automatic.

The Secretary should take notes about what takes place at each House meeting. The notes of the previous meeting should be read at the beginning of the next meeting so that all the members can agree with the record of what the House had previously determined. If the Secretary has made a mistake in recording what had happened, it should be corrected and the minutes of the meeting should be made a permanent record of the House. The next item of business, except at a special meeting considering the dismissal of a member, should be the report on House finances by the Treasurer. That report should include (a) the amount of the bills outstanding, (b) the cash on hand, (c) members' rent paid in advance, and (d) members' rent due. To the extent possible the Treasurer should project what the House finances are likely to be over the next month. Take into account the expectation of any large utility bills or unusual expenses.

The House meeting should then take up new applications if there is a

vacancy. Members listen to each member who has met or talked to the applicant. A vote should be taken on each applicant. If the applicant is rejected he or she should be told right after the meeting. If the applicant is accepted, and space is available, he or she should be informed as to when to move in and given a copy of the manual so as to understand how Oxford House works. If the applicant is accepted, but no space is immediately available, he or she should be put on a waiting list and told his or her prospects of getting in. Whenever a waiting list gets long, a house should consider the feasibility of starting another house. Each new member should be told that the application he or she completed constitutes agreement to follow the rules of the House.

Meetings also include the wide range of decisions facing an Oxford House from purchases of wastebaskets to plans for opening a new House. The House meeting is the place to resolve any conflicts which arise from living together as a group. It is also a good place to pass on information about new AA meetings or up-coming AA related events. Staying sober and enjoying life is at the heart of Oxford House living.

Money

Oxford House is built on the principle of self-help. When it comes to money matters, this simply means that any House must operate from its rent receipts. There may be exceptions when a House is first getting started. After a few weeks or months, a new Oxford House should be able to pay all of its operating expenses out of its rental income.

Some expenses associated with an Oxford House are not controllable after a commitment has been made to begin a House. For example, the monthly rental payment will be a fixed amount. In addition, utilities (electric, gas or oil, basic telephone and often water) will for the most part be fixed expenses. One area where expenses are controllable involves the purchase of food and supplies. All expenses, whether fixed or controllable, must be carefully watched so that any member at any time can know the exact financial condition of the House. Particular attention must be paid to the telephone expenses. Each member should pay for his or her own long distance calls. Usually the Comptroller is responsible to see that the members pay their share of the telephone bill promptly so that the House is not faced with an unwanted and unwarranted expense.

The President, the Treasurer, and Comptroller all have a responsibility for making certain that accurate records are maintained showing expenses and income of the House. Every Oxford House should have its own checking account and make certain to run all income and outgo through the checking account as the main control point for keeping track of money flow. The very first thing a new Oxford House does is to establish a checking account. At least three officers of the House should be authorized to sign checks with two signatures required on each check in order for it to be valid. Any local bank will

be more than willing to assist an Oxford House in establishing its checking account. Promptly deposit member's rent in the checking account and pay all bills by check.¹⁴ That is the easiest and safest way to assure to good recordkeeping.

Each Oxford House should maintain (1) a membership ledger; (2) a cash receipts journal and (3) a cash expenses journal. The Treasurer is responsible for keeping these records and for posting the "Weekly Financial Status Report". The "Weekly Financial Status Report" lets everyone in the House know exactly the current financial condition of the House. It shows:

- money on hand on the week before;
- money on hand that week;
- bills paid during the last week;
- bills due during the current week;
- bills due by the end of the current month;
- members' rent paid in advance (total dollars);
- members' rent behind (total dollars) and
- list status of individual members (paid in advance, up-to-date and behind) by member.¹⁵

The Treasurer and Comptroller are the two officers primarily responsible for assuring sound financial management for an Oxford House. Together with the President, they should continually check and cross-check the books so as to assure the accuracy of the true financial status of the House. At each weekly meeting, a report should be made and discussed with the full membership of the House so that the membership can determine whether the member rent is too high or too low and whether an individual has fallen too far behind in the payment of his rent.

¹⁴ Sometimes petty cash is useful for buying the staples the House will use. Usually petty cash is less than \$100 and can be run through the checking account by making out a check for "cash". Receipts should then be kept for purchases made out of petty cash and on a weekly basis the Treasurer should balance the cash against the receipts in the petty cash fund. The Treasurer is usually the person who has control over the petty cash and pays individual members who make the purchases of staples for the House. A separate little book for petty cash is useful to maintain; showing income and outgo. A small amount of petty cash is a good idea because checks for only a few dollars can become expensive when the bank charges for checks written.

¹⁵ There are no "secrets" in an Oxford House. members need to know whether the House is living on "borrowed money" (from rents paid in advance) or whether members are falling behind in rent in order to know how much needs to be charged for a House to be financially sound. See sample of a useful weekly financial reporting form at the back of the manual.

Oxford House, Inc.

Oxford House, Inc. , serves as an umbrella, non-profit corporation for all the Oxford Houses which have or will be given a charter. It serves as a central coordinating body for the various Oxford Houses. In this role, problems which are common to the individual Houses can be resolved through a centralized organization. In addition, Oxford House, Inc., can sometimes arrange and monitor loans from financially secure Houses to those in need of help. Above all, Oxford House, Inc., can share the experiences of successful Oxford Houses with new Houses so as to assure their success.

Presidents of the individual Oxford Houses are the Board of Directors of Oxford House, Inc., and meet in person, within geographic areas, once a month. On matters affecting Oxford House as a whole telephone contact and written material tie all directors together for special meetings.

Once the number of individual Oxford Houses exceeds twenty, the management of Oxford House, Inc., will shift to a representative Board of Directors made up of nine Directors. The nine Directors will be chosen from among the current and past Presidents of the individual Oxford Houses. This change was voted by the Directors of Oxford House, Inc. simply to make it easier for Oxford House, Inc. to act promptly on matters affecting Oxford House as a whole. As the number of Oxford Houses continued to increase there was concern that the number of Directors of Oxford House, Inc. , could become so large that the Board would become unmanageable. Therefore, while control of Oxford House, Inc. will always remain with the individual Oxford Houses, the size of the Board will be limited to nine members selected by and from the Presidents of the individual Houses.¹⁶

¹⁶ Oxford House, Inc. was reincorporated as a Delaware, non-profit corporation on October 19, 1987. Following the reincorporation, the Board of Directors, made up of the Presidents of the 12 individual Oxford Houses then in existence, adopted new By-Laws for the Corporation which provided a shift to a representative Board of nine directors.

Oxford House Traditions

- 1. Oxford House has as its primary goal the provision of housing and rehabilitative support for the alcoholic who wants to stop drinking or using and stay stopped.*
- 2. All Oxford Houses are run on a democratic basis. Our officers are but trusted servants serving continuous periods of no longer than six months in any one office.*
- 3. No Member of an Oxford House is ever asked to leave without cause -- a dismissal vote by the membership because of drinking, drug using, or disruptive behavior.*
- 4. Oxford House is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous, organizationally or financially, but Oxford House members realize that only active participation in Alcoholics Anonymous 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 although financially secure houses may, with approval or encouragement of Oxford House, Inc., provide new or financially needy houses a loan for a term not to exceed one year.*
- 7. Oxford House should remain forever non-professional, although individual members may be encouraged to utilize outside professionals whenever such utilization is likely to enhance recovery from alcoholism.*
- 8. Propagation of the Oxford House, Inc. concept should always be conceived as public education rather than promotion. Principles should always be placed before personalities.*
- 9. Members who leave an Oxford House in good standing are encouraged to become associate members and offer friendship, support, and example, to newer members.*

TRADITION ONE

Oxford House has as its primary goal the provision of housing and rehabilitative support for the alcoholic who wants to stop drinking and stay stopped.

By the time many of us had stopped drinking, we had lost jobs; we had lost families, and some of us either had no place to live or no place to live which was not an invitation to start drinking again. Oxford House was founded not only to put a roof over our head, but also to create a home where the disease of alcoholism was understood and the need for the alcoholic to stay away from the first drink was emphasized.

Oxford House is group housing. The bond that holds the group together is the desire to stop drinking and stay stopped. Modest rooms and living facilities can become luxurious suites when viewed from an environment of alcoholics working together for comfortable sobriety.

When we stopped drinking, we began to realize that in order to stay stopped, our lives would need to change. Alcoholics Anonymous provided a framework for us to change physically, mentally, and spiritually. The degree to which we were able to successfully change our lives had a direct relationship to Alcoholics Anonymous. Many of us soon learned, however, that living alone or living among our old drinking companions made it more difficult to practice the principles necessary for continued sobriety.

Some of us had lived for a time in alcoholic rehabilitation facilities. Those facilities provided us with shelter, food, and therapy for understanding alcoholism. Initially, the structure and supervision of such facilities were acceptable because physically and mentally, we were exhausted. Later, some of us were to move into halfway houses which provided shelter, food, and supervision. As our recovery progressed, the supervision and dependency on a halfway house created dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction was in part the realization that we were shirking responsibility for our own lives and in part a resentment of authority. The third factor affecting us both in the rehabilitation facilities and the halfway houses was the realization that the duration of our stay must be limited because space must be made for others in need of help.

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 drinking companions. Throughout its tradition, Oxford House has combined the concepts of self-support and responsibility with a fellowship having the common purpose of continued and comfortable sobriety. Oxford House must always have as its primary goal the provision of housing and rehabilitative support for the alcoholic who wants to stop drinking and stay stopped.

TRADITION TWO

All Oxford Houses are run on a democratic basis. Our officers are but trusted servants serving continuous periods of no longer than six months in any one office.

During the last days of our drinking, most of us ceased to function as responsible individuals. We were not only dependent upon alcohol, but were also dependent on many others for continuing our alcoholic ways. When we stopped drinking, we began to realize just how dependent we had become. For those of us who had been in institutions or halfway houses, resentments against authority were common.

A major part of the Oxford House philosophy is that dependency is best overcome through an acceptance of responsibility. In Oxford House, each member equally shares the responsibility for the running of the House and upholding the Oxford House tradition. All aspects of Oxford House operations, from the acquisition of the house to the acceptance or dismissal of members, is carried out under democratic procedures. Each member has one vote and majority rule applies except that 80% of the members must agree in accepting new persons for membership.

During our drinking years, and even before, many of us found it difficult to accept authority. Many individuals in society are able to abide by the strict letter of any rule, regulation, or law. Alcoholics seem to have a tendency to test and retest the validity of any real, potential, or imagined restriction on their behavior. As alcoholics, we became experts at outwitting "the system." As recovering alcoholics, it has become important for us to learn how to live *without the use of alcohol or drugs*, within a society which relies on a wide variety of rules.

By running Oxford House on a democratic basis, members of Oxford House become able to accept the authority of the group because the group is a peer group. Each member has an equal voice in the group and each has an opportunity to relearn responsibility and to accept decisions once they are made.

The opportunity for a house to democratically function requires periodic meetings within the house -- at least once a week. Such meetings should be used to resolve any operational or personality problems facing the house. All members of Oxford House have a responsibility to fully participate in all the business of the House.

Any group, in order to function effectively, needs leaders. Misguided leaders can create dependency and usurp self-responsibility. Oxford House should rely on democratically-chosen leaders, but the leaders must always be but trusted servants. It is a principle of Oxford House that no member should serve in the same office for a continuous period of longer than six months.

TRADITION THREE

No member of an Oxford House is ever asked to leave without cause -- a dismissal vote by the membership because of drinking, drug use, or disruptive behavior.

During early recovery for alcoholism and addiction, some members had to leave an institution in order to make room for an alcoholic just beginning the recovery process. Other members were asked to leave halfway houses in order to make room for a recovering alcoholic who was ready to move into a halfway house. Only the very fortunate are able to make such a transition upon demand. Each individual recovers from alcoholism at a different pace. All too often, an abrupt transition from a protected environment to an environment which places considerable glamour on the use of alcohol causes a return to alcoholic drinking.

There is no reason to believe that society as a whole had the responsibility to provide long-term housing within a protected environment for the alcoholic. However, there is every reason to believe that alcoholics can do for themselves that which society as a whole has no responsibility to do for them. Oxford House is built on the premise of expanding in order to meet the needs of recovering alcoholics. This principle contrasts sharply with the principle of providing the alcoholic with assistance for a limited time period to make room for a more recently recovering alcoholic.

One of the greatest threats to the sobriety of a recovering alcoholic is loneliness. At a time when we acquired a serious desire to stop drinking, many of us had lost our families and friends because of our alcoholism. Too often, newly recovering alcoholics were faced with the necessity of living alone and of relying solely on contacts with Alcoholics Anonymous to stay sober. Some were able to keep from drinking in spite of the loneliness with which they were faced. Others were not so fortunate. The alcoholic alone began to compare himself to those members of Alcoholics Anonymous who still had family and friends. Loneliness and self-pity soon led such individuals back to alcoholic drinking or drug use. With Oxford House there is no need for a recovering individual to live in an environment dominated by loneliness.

The only members who will ever be asked to leave an Oxford House are those who return to drinking, using drugs, or have disruptive behavior, including the non-payment of rent. No Oxford House can tolerate the use of alcohol or drugs by one of its members because that threatens the sobriety of all of the members. Neither can an Oxford House function if some do not pay their fair share of the costs.

It is obvious why Oxford House must strongly protect the sobriety of its other members by asking the drinking member or member using drugs to leave. The line between an Oxford House of recovering alcoholics and an Oxford House of active alcoholics is a thin one. A member's tenure is absolutely secure in an Oxford House as long as he does not drink or use drugs, keeps his rent up to date and is not disruptive.

TRADITION FOUR

Oxford House is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous, organizationally or financially, but Oxford House members realize that only active participation in Alcoholics Anonymous offers assurance of continued sobriety.

Every Oxford House member attributes his sobriety to Alcoholics Anonymous. Each Oxford House member, as an individual, considers himself a member of AA. Without that, sobriety would be short-lived.

As individual members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Oxford House members are keenly aware of the Sixth Tradition of AA which is:

An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

In deference to that tradition, Oxford House has never sought nor obtained sponsorship from any AA group. Oxford House members value the Sixth Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous too greatly for themselves to try to get it deeply involved in the organizing, financing, or sponsorship of any Oxford House. However, Oxford House members firmly believe that the Oxford House concept can expand as an independent entity, fully utilizing the benefits of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In fact, Oxford House creates an environment whereby each member can more fully realize the benefits available from active AA membership. A house full of sober, recovering alcoholics invites informal AA "meetings after the meeting" and each day finds many informal AA meetings before individual members each go off to their regular AA meeting.

An underlying principle of Oxford House is that each individual member has the ability to be responsible for himself. Consequently, there is no requirement for members of an Oxford House to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. Nevertheless, the example of Oxford House members going to AA meetings on their own is contagious. It has been the experience of Oxford House that participation in AA is extremely high in an environment where one individual can see another individual, with the same disease, reaping great benefits from AA participation.

As an organization Oxford House is not part of AA. The members of Oxford House have found only by being active in AA have they found comfortable, long-term sobriety -- for themselves and the Oxford House in which they live.

TRADITION FIVE

Each Oxford House should be autonomous except in matters affecting other houses of Oxford House, Inc., as a whole.

Each Oxford House is self-supporting and self-run. The members of an Oxford House assume full responsibility for the operation of the House. The House is theirs and in no way is it part of any other organization. The rent that is charged the members is determined by the members themselves in a democratic fashion. The rules which govern the house are for the most part also made by those who live in a particular Oxford House.¹⁷ Such autonomy is essential for the Oxford House system to work. The reason that each Oxford House is independent arises from the very practical consideration that those who are closest to a situation are best able to manage it. If an Oxford House follows the democratic principles and traditions of Oxford House, Inc., it should have no difficulty in running smoothly.

The charter of each Oxford House requires that an Oxford House meet certain minimum requirements of Oxford House, Inc. First of all, no Oxford House may permit individuals to remain as members if those individuals are drinking or using drugs. Second, an Oxford House must follow the democratic principles in running the house. Third, an Oxford House must, in essence be a good member of the community by obeying the laws and paying its bills. Failure to adhere to any of these three requirements would bring the entire Oxford House concept into question. Therefore, it is important that each Oxford House meet these minimum responsibilities in order for its charter to be continued.¹⁸

Each local Oxford House is represented on the Board of Directors of Oxford House, Inc. In fact, Oxford House, Inc. is run by the local Oxford Houses. The President of the local house is automatically a member of the Board and votes, either in person or by poll, on every issues taken up by the Board. The organization was deliberately set up to assure that each Oxford House be autonomous .

¹⁷Rules against anyone living in an Oxford House who uses alcohol or drugs are universal with all houses. For obvious reasons, an individual house cannot establish different rules in this regard because such rules would run entirely counter to the primary purpose and functions of the Oxford House System.

¹⁸At this point in the text the original Oxford House Traditions, which were written when the first Oxford House began in the Fall of 1975, stated: "At this time, it also appears that Oxford Houses can be totally self-supporting. By that, we mean that a minimum amount of government support or private support may be accepted for start-up purposes." As this is written, twelve years later, it should be noted that in fact Oxford Houses have totally existed without government support and the start-up loans have, for the most part come from existing houses.

TRADITION SIX

Each Oxford House should be financially self-supporting although financially secure houses may, with approval or encouragement of Oxford House, Inc., provide new or financially needy houses a loan for a term not to exceed one year.

Oxford House was built on the unique concept that its members should try to expand the number of beds available -- rather than turn existing members out of the house after a set period of time. In carrying out that concept, Oxford House-Silver Spring, shortly after it was six months old, put up over \$1,200 in order to start Oxford House-Washington. Later Oxford House-Washington did the same for the start-up of another House. From the beginning, existing Oxford Houses helped new ones get started. Once a new House gets on its feet, it pays back the older Houses, which had loaned it money, and stands ready to help another new House.¹⁹

When an Oxford House first starts, it is generally necessary for the members to pay a slightly higher rent than they pay once the House is established. There are two reasons for this pattern. First, there are start-up costs associated with the beginning of any new house such as security deposits, supplies and furnishings.²⁰ Second, when a House first starts it takes some time to fill all the beds. As all the available beds in a House become full the members can decide whether to lower the rent or begin to develop a small surplus. As a practical matter, most houses choose to have a surplus of one month's expenses. Once having obtained that surplus, it then decides whether to lower the rent or to accumulate money for the beginning of a new house -- or to do both.

Starting new Houses through the mutual assistance of existing Oxford Houses is a tradition because each House was started with the help of existing Houses and tends to pass on to others that which they received. Once more applications are received than there are beds available, the members of any Oxford House will begin to look around for another suitable house. Often several members of an existing House will move into the new House to provide a core group of new members who already know how an Oxford House works.

¹⁹ Numerous Oxford Houses have been opened since 1975. Some operate for several years and then, because of expiration of a lease, dissatisfaction with the facilities or simply the finding of a better location, the members of a particular House moved into a new location. In all cases a House must pay back the loan on a regular schedule and within an agreed upon time.

²⁰ For example, the landlord and phone company may require a security deposit and, while furnishings are generally donated, members will often have to rent a truck in order to pick them up. There may also be a need to buy more "staples" such as flour, sugar, coffee, etc. when a House starts up.

TRADITION SEVEN

Oxford House should remain forever non-professional, although individual members may be encouraged to utilize outside professionals whenever such utilization is likely to enhance recovery from alcoholism.

It is inconsistent with the Oxford House system of deomocratic rule to have a professional manager of Oxford House. Likewise, it is inconsistent with the Oxford House concept to have a requirement placed on members to utilize the services of psychiatrists, doctors, or even the program of Alcoholics Anonymous except in very special circumstances.

Still, within an Oxford House group, it is not unusual to find some members who have problems which cannot be dealt with by the group. In those situations, it is not uncommon for the Oxford House members at a meeting to strongly suggest that a fellow member seek professional help. In those situations where a member's behavior is disruptive to the group as a whole, the member may be required to seek such professional help in order to avoid being dismissed from Oxford House.

One can only be dismissed from an Oxford House because of drinking, using drugs, non-payment of rent, or disruptive behavior. Members should be careful not to abuse the dismissal process. Every opportunity should be given to a member who needs professional help to see that he obtains it.

Nearly all members of Oxford House utilize the AA or NA program in order to obtain and keep a comfortable sobriety. However, an Oxford House relies primarily upon example for assuring a high percentage of AA attendance from its members. As a general rule formal AA meetings are not held in an Oxford House. However, every member who has maintained comfortable sobriety in an Oxford House makes it a practice to attend a lot of AA meetings on a regular basis.²¹

Individuals living in each of the Oxford Houses have also been responsible for starting many new groups of Alcoholics Anonymous having meetings near an Oxford House. This not only helps those individuals to become more involved in AA and thereby reap greater individual benefits but also helps to build strong bonds between local AA groups and Oxford House.

²¹ The Spring 1988 Survey of Oxford House members shows the average member attends six AA or NA meetings a week.

TRADITION EIGHT

Propagation of the Oxford House, Inc. concept should always be conceived as public education rather than promotion. Principles should always be placed before personalities.

Those who have benefitted from an Oxford House have acquired enthusiasm for the Oxford House concept. In their enthusiasm, they have been anxious to share Oxford House with any recovering alcoholics who want to establish an Oxford House in their community.

Every Oxford House member stands ready to explain the workings of his House and the benefits derived there to anyone anywhere. No personal gain is derived from any Oxford House promotion. It should also be pointed out that Oxford House, Inc. in no way gains from the creation of new Oxford Houses. It has been formed as a non-profit corporation and will continue to operate as one both according to the letter and spirit of the law.

It is not easy to spread the word of a new concept or an old concept with a new twist. Propagation, or spreading the word, of the Oxford House concept is given the highest priority by the members of Oxford House.

Before spreading the word, an individual Oxford House should make certain that it is sufficiently established to undertake public discussion of its goals and mission. The best sales pitch for spreading the word about Oxford House is simply the establishment of a sound Oxford House and a straightforward discussion of what it is, how it works and why it is needed.

As with any group or organization, there will be some individuals who will be so impressed with the Oxford House concept that they will become "super salesmen." Each super-salesman should be keenly aware that the Oxford House concept is one based on principles rather than personalities. The situation should be avoided whereby certain individuals will begin to equate their persuasive qualities with the Oxford House concept. The concept itself is far more persuasive than any individual.

The Oxford House concept is a sound one, based on sound principles, and has demonstrated its worth with an established track record. We should spread the word about Oxford House, but be wary of individuals who place their own personalities before the principles that made Oxford House work.

TRADITION NINE

Members who leave an Oxford House in good standing are encouraged to become associate members and offer friendship, support, and example to newer members.

While no one is ever asked to leave an Oxford House without cause, some individuals will simply outgrow living in an Oxford House. They will return to their families; they may start new families; they may simply move into another living situation.

Once a member has left an Oxford House, he should be encouraged to become an associate member. An associate member may or may not pay dues according to whatever rules a local Oxford House establishes. The associate member should be encouraged to attend meetings, but a local house may decide that his voting privileges are somewhat less than those who live in the House. Such a restriction of voting privileges makes sense and should not discourage members who leave in good standing from becoming associate members.

Gratitude is a feeling that most alcoholics acquire sometime during their recovery process. Often, recovering alcoholics find it difficult to adequately express their gratitude. The associate member of Oxford House is in the enviable position of being able to show his gratitude by continuing to provide support to current Oxford House residents. The associate member can offer friendship, support, and an example to the active members of an Oxford House.

Moreover, the associate member can often provide assistance in forming new Oxford Houses or in recruiting new members who want to live in an Oxford House. Above all the associate member serves as an example of one who lived in an Oxford House and "made it."

All Oxford Houses should encourage members who leave in good standing to maintain a continuous link with their Oxford House experience. The welcome mat should be out to any associate member and contacts between associate members and active members should be encouraged.

To the extent possible each Oxford House should keep Oxford House, Inc. up-to-date with the current address of Associate Members, who have left the House in good standing, so that they can receive the "Oxford Grape" and other Oxford House newsletters.²²

²² Names and addresses of Associate Members and inquiries concerning the Oxford House Manual should be sent to Oxford House, Inc. 9314 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901.

OXFORD SYSTEM CHECKLIST

MONEY

- **set up checking account for each Oxford House**
 - name of House and address on each check
 - require at least two signatures to write a check
 - record all deposits, checks drawn and service charges
 - run all income and expenses through account
 - post monthly statement so all members of House can see

- **set weekly rent at amount to cover costs**
 - figure monthly expenses (rent, utilities, staples)
 - divide by number of beds likely to be occupied
 - add a small amount to enable House to have a reserve

- **collect rent in advance**
 - usually a House sets a rule of one or two weeks in advance
 - do not let members get behind in rent
 - if a member is behind in his rent confront the member at the weekly meeting
 - discuss hardship cases at a meeting before accepting a new member--*sometimes, if a House can afford it, it may be necessary to take into account the fact that an individual just out of rehabilitation will have to get a job in order to rent money*

- **utilities**
 - remember electric bill is higher in summer
 - remember fuel bill is higher in winter
 - telephone long distance calls must be paid by user
 - protect against telephone long distance abuse

Alcohol and Drugs

- **sobriety**
 - sobriety is the primary purpose of an Oxford House
 - make no compromise
 - frequently go to AA meetings but rely on "attraction"; formal AA meeting should be outside the house

- **alcohol or drug use**

- as soon as use is suspected call a special meeting
- when a majority vote confirms use expulsion results
- if drunk or high, member should leave immediately
- if passive, leave the next morning
- make no exceptions
- establish a readmission guideline of thirty days sobriety
- accept the fact that the House welfare is more important than any individual
- accept the fact that "tough love" stops relapses

OFFICERS

- **House President**

- elected for six month term
- must be resident of House
- calls and leads weekly and special meetings
- cannot succeed himself but can be elected to the same office after six months have elapsed

- **House Treasurer**

- elected for six month term
- must be resident of House
- responsible for maintaining House financial records
- keeps membership informed about financial condition
- cannot succeed himself but can be elected to the same office after six months have elapsed

- **House Secretary**

- elected for six month term
- must be resident of House
- responsible for recording minutes of House meetings
- keeps pending applications for new memberships
- sends thank you notes to contributors
- cannot succeed himself but can be elected to the same office after six months have elapsed

• **House Comptroller**

- elected for six month term
- must be resident of House
- collects rent
- deals with day to day expenses
- responsible to Treasurer
- balances books with Treasurer prior to each meeting
- cannot succeed himself but can be elected to same office after six months have elapsed

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

• **Alcoholics Anonymous**

- individual members should attend many AA meetings
- Oxford House is not affiliated with AA but members of the House know that only active participation in AA offers assurance of continued sobriety
- let AA members know about Oxford House and how it is doing

• **Neighbors**

- be a good neighbor
- keep the outside of the House looking good
- be considerate of where members park cars
- get to know neighbors and be friendly
- write thank you notes to those who give furniture and other things to the House

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*This Oxford System Checklist is simply a guideline used by one of the existing Houses. Your House may have better ideas and shorter or longer checklist. Use whatever helps to keep your Oxford House running smoothly so that all members have comfortable and long term sobriety.*

Page No:

Name of House:

# Weekly Financial Status Report

WEEK OF \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_

CASH START OF THIS WEEK: →

\$

### TOTAL RECEIPTS

| DAY | SOURCE AND PURPOSE | AMOUNT |
|-----|--------------------|--------|
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TOTAL MONEY RECEIVED: →

\$

PLUS

### EXPENDITURES BY CHECK AND CASH

| DAY | TO WHOM PAID | CHECK NO. | AMOUNT |
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|     |              |           |        |

TOTAL MONEY PAID OUT: →

\$

MINUS

### BILLS TO BE PAID

CASH END OF THIS WEEK: →

\$

| TO WHOM | DATE DUE | AMOUNT |
|---------|----------|--------|
|         |          |        |
|         |          |        |
|         |          |        |
|         |          |        |
|         |          |        |
|         |          |        |

TOTAL TO BE PAID: →

CARRY FORWARD TO NEXT PAGE

# Oxford House Business Meeting Report

RECORD THE ACTIONS TAKEN AT THIS MEETING ON THE OTHER SIDE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

|                    |           |                     |             |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>1. PURPOSE:</b> |           |                     |             |
| REGULAR BUSINESS   | EXPULSION | VOTE IN NEW MEMBERS | SPECIAL     |
|                    |           |                     | MEETING NO. |

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| <b>2. MEMBERS PRESENT:</b> |     |
| 1.                         | 7.  |
| 2.                         | 8.  |
| 3.                         | 9.  |
| 4.                         | 10. |
| 5.                         | 11. |
| 6.                         | 12. |

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| <b>3. MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:</b> |    |
| 1.                             | 4. |
| 2.                             | 5. |
| 3.                             | 6. |

IF THE MEETING IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING EXPULSION, ACCEPTANCE OF A NEW MEMBER OR A SPECIAL MEETING, USE THE BACK OF THIS MEETING REPORT TO RECORD THE ACTIONS TAKEN AT THE MEETING. IF IT IS A REGULAR MEETING, CONTINUE WITH THIS SIDE OF THE FORM.

## 4. READ MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

AFTER THE READING OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, THE PRESIDENT SHOULD ASK THE GROUP IF THERE ARE ANY CHANGES. IF THERE ARE CHANGES, RECORD THE CHANGES IN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING BELOW. IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE USE BACK OF THIS FORM.

## 5. CHANGES IN THE MINUTES - IF ANY

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## 6. TREASURER'S REPORT

TREASURER'S REPORT SHOULD BE GIVEN IF THIS IS A REGULAR MEETING.

|                  | WEEKLY FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT ATTACHED: | Y/N: | MEMBERS OWING RENT: |    |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|----|
| IF NO, FILL IN ↓ | 1. TOTAL RECEIPTS:                       | \$   |                     | \$ |
|                  | 2. TOTAL MONEY PAID OUT:                 | \$   |                     | \$ |
|                  | 3. MONEY OWED:                           | \$   |                     | \$ |
|                  | 4. CASH ON HAND:                         | \$   |                     | \$ |

## *Minutes of this Meeting*

### 7. COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

THE COMPTROLLER REPORTS ON ANY MEMBER WHO IS BEHIND IN RENT AND DISCUSSES THE STEPS BEING TAKEN TO GET THEIR RENT UP TO DATE.

### 8. CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

THE CO-ORDINATOR, IF A HOUSE HAS ONE, USUALLY DISCUSSES THE CONDITION OF THE HOUSE AND ANY PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN GETTING CLEAN-UP DETAILS ORGANIZED. NOTE: HOUSE SAFETY, SUCH AS FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, TESTING FIRE ALARMS AND CHECKING THAT EXITS ARE NOT BLOCKED IS THE CO-ORDINATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY.

### 9. OLD BUSINESS

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### 10. NEW BUSINESS

CAREFULLY WRITE ALL MOTIONS AND VOTES TAKEN ON EACH

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SIGNATURE OF SECRETARY

TIME MEETING STARTED

TIME MEETING ENDED

# Application For Membership In Oxford House

1. Print Name [ last, first, middle ]      2. Date of Birth [month]      [day]      [year]

[      ] [      ] [      ]

3. Current Address: [ street ]

[ city ]

[ state ]

[ zip ]

4. Telephone where you can be reached (H) [      ] [      ] (W) [      ] [      ]

5. Are you an alcoholic ?     yes     no

6. Are you addicted to other drugs ?     yes     no    If "yes", list what drugs you have used in the last three year period:

7. Have you been through a rehabilitation facility ?     yes     no

[if yes, list where and when]:

8. Date of last Drink ? [      ]    Date of last Drug ? [      ]

9. When did you attend your first AA or NA meeting ? [      ]

10. How many AA and NA meetings do you now attend each week? [      ]

11. Do you want to stop drinking or using and stay stopped?     yes     no

*Reminder : we will not release the following financial and employment information but need to know it to evaluate whether you can pay your weekly Oxford House share.*

12. Are you now employed     yes     no    If "yes" list where on back of form

13. Are you now getting welfare, pension or any other regular income?     yes     no  
If "yes" give source and amount on the back of this form.

14. If you do not have a job will you get one?     yes     no ( explain on back)

15. What is your monthly income-right now? \$

16. What do you expect it to be next month? \$

17. Marital Status:     single     married     separated     divorced

18. List on the back of this form the name, address, and telephone number of two people, either of whom Oxford House should contact in case of an accident or other emergency. Also, if you have one, list your medical doctor and phone number.

19. Do you take a prescription drug?     yes     no    If "yes", what?

20. I have read the item above my signature on this application and understand that if accepted in an Oxford House, I agree to the terms in that item including the waiver of any landlord-tenant rights I might have with respect to residency in Oxford House. I understand that I fully subject myself to the rules of the House. Deposits will not be refunded if an individual is required to leave. If leaving is voluntary and two weeks notice is given at a weekly meeting, the security deposit is usually repaid within two weeks or after the house phone bill comes and appropriate deductions are made for any long distance calls.

*The nature of Oxford House requires expulsion, without notice or refund of security deposit, of any resident member who is found by majority vote of the house membership to be using either alcohol or drugs. Use, disruptive behavior or nonpayment of fees can lead to immediate eviction.*

**SIGNATURE:**

Date:

Oxford House National Headquarters • Telephone (800)344-2509

*This side of the Application for Membership in Oxford House contains additional space, where necessary, to answer questions on the front of the form.*

12.[employment] \_\_\_\_\_

13. [other income] \_\_\_\_\_

14.[job prospects] \_\_\_\_\_

18.[emergency number -Doctor; two family or friends] \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever lived in an Oxford House before?**  Yes  No If "yes" list address and approximate dates of residence below:

I lived in Oxford House(s) \_\_\_\_\_ between the following dates:  
from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. I left for the following reason(s):  Relapse  
 Disruptive Behavior  Voluntarily

Use space below for extension of any other answers on other side -- if necessary.

This application can be used to apply at any Oxford House. The address at the right is where this application came from. If there is no address, you can get the name of the nearest Oxford House to you by calling 1-800-344-2509.

**APPENDIX D**  
**THE FEDERAL GUIDELINES**



**Wednesday, April 19, 1989**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration**

**Group Home for Recovering Substance Abusers; Guidelines**

Pub. L. 100-690, The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, amended Subpart I of Part B of Title XIX of the Public Health Service Act by adding a new section 1916A establishing a program entitled Group Homes for Recovering Substance Abusers. In accordance with the law, guidelines for the operation of this new program follow:

**Introduction**

The Group Homes for Recovering Substance Abusers program provides for the nationwide establishment of self-help recovery housing services and a cost-effective method for many recovering individuals to avoid relapse.

Under the new law, recovering individuals will have the opportunity to develop a new alcohol and drug free lifestyle by accepting responsibility for operation of alcohol and drug free recovery housing. By having responsibility for operating a recovery house within a democratically run and self-supported system, individuals gain confidence in exercising responsibility without the use of alcohol and drugs. **Note:** there are no restrictions in the statute regarding the source of funds for self-support.

Experience demonstrates that democratically operated, self-supported systems instill responsibility and accomplishment in the residents thereby making long-term abstinence from drug and alcohol use more viable. For these reasons, the new law utilizes the principle of making available small start-up loans rather than grants for supporting the costs of establishing recovery housing services.

It is important to note that the number of new houses started will depend upon the degree to which the new program is promoted and explained at both the State and Federal levels of Government. The concept is new, therefore, considerable education and promotion is necessary to achieve an understanding of its simplicity and how it works.

**Purpose**

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist States in establishing a revolving fund to provide loans to non-profit private entities for the costs of establishing programs for the provision of housing in which individuals recovering from alcohol or drug abuse may reside. The guidelines are intended to identify potential problems and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to relevant issues in developing and establishing programs to implement the legislation.

The guidelines are not intended to supplant the functions or responsibilities of the States. They do not constitute Federal regulation but are *advisory* in nature and are intended to reflect a logical, reasonable approach which is consistent with the legislation.

**Applicability**

The information contained herein applies only to section 1916 A of the Public Health Service Act. All existing Federal, State, and local laws and regulations must continue to be complied with in implementing this new provision of law.

**Structure**

The guidelines address three basic elements necessary for the States to implement the legislation: (1) Establishing the fund; (2) establishing a loan management process; and (3) establishing quality control and accountability measures.

**Authority**

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 (Pub. L. 100-690, approved November 18, 1988) amended Subpart I of part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x) by adding a new section 1916A establishing a program entitled Group Homes for Recovering Substance Abusers.

Generally, this section requires each State, as a contingency of receiving funds under the Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Mental Services (ADMS) Block Grant, to establish a revolving fund of at least \$100,000 to provide loans to non-profit private entities for the provision of housing for four or more recovering individuals who want to rent a house or use other housing as self-supported and self-run alcohol and drug free recovery programs.

Specifically, section 1916A states:

(a) For fiscal year 1989, the Secretary may not make payments under section 1914 unless the State involved agrees—

(1) to establish, directly or through the provision of a grant or contract to a non-profit private entity, a revolving fund to make loans for the costs of establishing programs for the provision of housing in which individuals recovering from alcohol or drug abuse may reside in groups of not less than 4 individuals;

(2) to ensure that the programs are carried out in accordance with guidelines issued under subsection (c);

(3) to ensure that not less than \$100,000 will be available for the revolving fund;

(4) to ensure that each loan made from the revolving fund does not exceed \$4,000 and that each such loan is repaid to the revolving fund not later than 2 years after the date on which the loan is made;

(5) to ensure that each such loan is repaid through monthly installments and that a reasonable penalty is assessed for each failure to pay such periodic installments by the date specified in the loan agreement involved; and

(6) to ensure that such loans are made only to nonprofit private entities agreeing that, in the operation of the program established pursuant to the loan—

(A) the use of alcohol or any illegal drug in the housing provided by the program will be prohibited;

(B) any resident of the housing who violates such prohibition will be expelled from the housing;

(C) the costs of the housing, including fees for rent and utilities, will be paid by the residents of the housing, and

(D) the residents of the housing will, through a majority vote of the residents, otherwise establish policies governing residence in the housing, including the manner in which applications for residence in the housing are approved.

(b) For Fiscal Year 1990 and subsequent fiscal years, the Secretary may not make payments under section 1914 unless the State involved provides assurances satisfactory to the Secretary that the State has provided for the establishment and ongoing operation of a revolving fund in accordance with subsection (a).

(c) Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Comprehensive Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Amendments Act of 1988, the Secretary, acting through the Administrator, shall issue guidelines for the operation of programs described in subsection (a).

### *Establishment of the Fund*

States must establish, directly or through provision of a grant or contract to a non-profit private entity, a revolving fund to make loans for the costs of establishing programs for the provision of housing in which individuals recovering from alcohol or drug abuse may reside in groups of not less than 4 individuals.

The Federal Government reiterates the basic principle under the ADMS Block Grant program that a State has discretion over the manner in which this new requirement is implemented so long as the State's position is not clearly erroneous.

### *Creation of the Fund*

States are required to establish a revolving fund in the amount of \$100,000. There is no legislative requirement concerning the source of monies required to establish the fund. Therefore, monies used to establish the revolving fund may come from any source not otherwise restricted by Federal, State, or local entities. As an example, States may accept contributions from outside sources; may use discretionary funds emanating from the ADMS Block Grant; or may use general State revenues.

The revolving fund is to be self-sustaining. Program-generated funds (e.g. loan paybacks) should be reinvested into the revolving fund as should interest or dividends earned by the account.

spending patterns other than setting a limit of \$4,000 per loan. Limitations addressing these and other factors are entirely at the State's discretion.

**Purpose of the Fund**

Funds are to be used to provide small start-up loans to groups of recovering individuals. States should identify and clearly define purposes for which the State will authorize the expenditure of funds. All of those purposes must be in accordance with the legislation.

Examples of legitimate uses of revolving fund loans are: security deposit; first month's rent; furniture such as beds; facility modifications (e.g. conversion of a basement into a game room or extra bedroom); purchase of amenities which foster healthy group living (e.g. dishwasher).

### *Management of the Fund*

States must establish, directly or through the provision of a grant or contract to a non-profit private entity, a revolving fund.

If authorized by a State's law, the State may manage the revolving fund through commercial banks, or directly. States may opt to place management of the fund at any organizational position within their respective hierarchies, e.g., in the offices of the comptroller, housing authority, or health care system.

On the other hand, States may opt to or be required by State Constitution to establish a fund management group through the provision of a grant or contract to a non-profit private entity. Examples of such entities are: State credit unions; community action groups; foundations; not-for-profit alcohol and drug abuse service providers.

In every case, the fund management group must abide by existing Federal, State, and local regulations governing the operation of financial entities as well as those governing private non-profit organizations. They must have demonstrated capabilities of administering such a program at a level of professionalism and in accordance with standards acceptable to the State including proper notification for late payments.

Establishment of criteria for selecting a fund management group is at the discretion of the State. Consideration should be given to the qualifications, expertise, experience, and capabilities of those organizations.

Recordkeeping and auditing of the fund management operation should be in accordance with established policies and procedures governing similar financial institutions in the State.

### *Loan Configuration*

By law, individual loans for the establishment of programs to provide housing may not exceed \$4,000 each. The loans are to be repaid within a 2-year period (See repayment requirements below).

There is no legislative limitation on the number of times a group may apply for a loan to start-up a new recovery house.

States should use their discretion in establishing methods of paying out the funds, e.g., in a lump sum, by monthly draw, or by reimbursement.

### *Designation of Loan Approval Authority*

States may request assistance to approve/deny applications for loans from any entity (individual or group of individuals) meeting State-established criteria. Determinations of terms of office, appointment method, credentials required, etc., are at the discretion of the State. Examples are an advisory board of volunteers or a non-profit organization dedicated to the principle of self-help addiction recovery.

### *Borrower Eligibility Criteria*

Generally, loan applicants may be considered eligible if they are non-profit private entities and agree to operate the housing in a self-run and self-supported manner, including responsibility by residents of the housing for repayment of the loan according to its terms, and assure that its residents are free of alcohol and drug use.

As stipulated in the legislation, prospective borrowers must be non-profit private entities. They must agree: (1) To maintain the house as an alcohol and drug free environment; (2) that residents of the house will remain alcohol and drug free; (3) that any resident of the house who violates the pledge will be expelled from the house; (4) that the costs of the housing, including rent and utilities, will be borne by the residents; and (5) that the house will be operated as a self-managed democracy.

In determining eligibility of prospective borrowers, States (or their designees) may wish to consider such elements as: assurances that the stated, intended use of the funds is in accordance with the legislation; reasonable assurances that the group can manage their own alcohol and drug free recovery housing; an assessment of the group's "ability to pay;" and special populations, such as alcohol and drug dependent individuals who are homeless.

There is no legislative requirement that the group acquire sponsorship or affiliate with treatment, rehabilitation, or other groups. However, affiliation of the new group home with such organizations encourages the recovery community to provide quality control.

**Application Procedure**

Each State (or its designee) should establish a procedure and process for applying for a loan under this program. The loan approval authority may wish to require, as an example, the completion of application forms, or face to face interviews with prospective borrowers. Submission of evidence to support assertions is at the discretion of the State as is the method of verifying eligibility.

Timelines, milestones, required documentation, and procedures should be clearly defined, written, and made available to all applicants.

**Repayment Requirements**

The law stipulates that each loan is to be repaid through monthly installments and that each such loan is to be repaid to the revolving fund not later than 2 years after the date on which the loan is made. Further, a reasonable penalty is to be assessed for each failure to pay such periodic installments by the date specified in the loan agreement.

Repayment schedules and prescribed penalties for late or missing payments should be established by the State. In the event a given group appears unable to satisfy the loan obligation, States may consider alerting the quality control group to determine what assistance the group in arrears might need.

Liability and recourse for default is to be determined by the State.

**Quality Control**

Quality control is simply the assurance that the homes stay alcohol and drug free, pay their bills, and are run democratically.

States may wish to establish a quality control group whose general purpose would be to see that the program is operated in a legal, viable, and effective manner. Membership in this group, its location in an organizational structure, its responsibilities, and its authorities would be established by the State.

By virtue of the requirement that a house be self-governed, the residents could be construed as a quality control group. The State may consider requiring

its fund management group to acquire corroboration that the recovery house is operating in compliance with its obligations.

**Reporting**

States may be requested to provide information on the establishment/operation of Group Homes under these Guidelines. Data reporting requirements, if any, will be addressed through the Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services (ADMS) Block Grant reporting mechanism.

**Evaluation**

States are advised that, as part of an overall effort to assess the quality and effectiveness of services programs, section 2039 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 requires the Secretary to evaluate alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs to determine the quality and appropriateness of various forms of treatment, including the effect of living in group housing. Therefore, it is recommended that programs established under this new provision of law have in place a system for measuring progress and effectiveness. The system should include periodic, objective measures by individuals who are not recipients of the loan or who have no direct responsibility with administering the loan.

**Contact**

These guidelines provide a brief summary of basic principles and issues relating to the administration of a revolving loan program to provide group homes for recovering alcohol and drug abusers. Further information may be obtained from Mr. Gary Palsgrove, Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857. Mr. Palsgrove may be telephoned at 301-443-3820.

For additional program guidance, potential applicants should contact the appropriate State alcohol, drug abuse, or mental health authority.

The requirement for establishing the Group Homes for Recovering Substance Abusers program is contained in legislation which authorizes the Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services Block Grant program. See Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 13.992.

Joseph R. Leone,  
Associate Administrator for Management,  
Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health  
Administration.

[FR Doc. 89-9289 Filed 4-18-89; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4160-20-M

**APPENDIX E**  
**THE ANTI-DRUG ABUSE ACT OF 1988--**  
**REVOLVING FUNDS FOR GROUP RECOVERY HOMES**

Public Law 100-690  
100th Congress

An Act

To prevent the manufacturing, distribution, and use of illegal drugs, and for other purposes.

Nov. 18, 1988

[H.R. 5210]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

Anti-Drug Abuse  
Act of 1988,  
21 USC 1501  
note.

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988".

**SEC. 2. TABLE OF TITLES.**

Title I—Coordination of national drug policy  
Title II—Treatment and prevention programs  
Title III—Drug education programs  
Title IV—International narcotics control  
Title V—User accountability  
Title VI—Anti-drug abuse amendments act of 1988  
Title VII—Death penalty and other criminal and law enforcement matters  
Title VIII—Federal alcohol administration  
Title IX—Miscellaneous  
Title X—Supplemental appropriations

## TITLE II—TREATMENT AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

**SEC. 2001. TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

Sec. 2001. Table of contents.

Subtitle A—Programs Relating to Public Health Service Act

Sec. 2011. Short title.

Sec. 2012. Purposes.

**CHAPTER 1—REVISION AND EXTENSION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BLOCK GRANT**

Sec. 2021. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 2022. Formula for allotments.

Sec. 2023. Set-aside for fiscal year 1989 for treatment for substance abuse.

Sec. 2024. Construction of substance abuse facilities.

Sec. 2025. Prevention and treatment with respect to intravenous drug abuse.

Sec. 2026. Limitation on administrative expenses.

Sec. 2027. New mental health services and programs.

Sec. 2028. Independent peer review and manner of compliance.

Sec. 2029. Intrastate allocations.

Sec. 2030. Set-aside for services for intravenous drug abuse.

Sec. 2031. Maintenance of effort.

Sec. 2032. Set-aside for women and children.

Sec. 2033. Set-aside for mental health services for children.

Sec. 2034. Certain required agreements.

Sec. 2035. Requirement of establishment of mental health services planning council.

Sec. 2036. Group homes for recovering substance abusers.

Sec. 2037. Report and audits.

Sec. 2038. Technical assistance.

Sec. 2039. Service research on community-based alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs.

Sec. 2040. Service research on community-based mental health treatment programs.

Sec. 2041. State comprehensive mental health service plan.

**SEC. 2036. GROUP HOMES FOR RECOVERING SUBSTANCE ABUSERS.**

Subpart I of part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x) is amended by inserting after section 1916 the following new section:

**"GROUP HOMES FOR RECOVERING SUBSTANCE ABUSERS**

42 USC 300x-4a.

Loans.

**"SEC. 1916A. (a)** For fiscal year 1989, the Secretary may not make payments under section 1914 unless the State involved agrees—

**"(1)** to establish, directly or through the provision of a grant or contract to a nonprofit private entity, a revolving fund to make loans for the costs of establishing programs for the provision of housing in which individuals recovering from alcohol or drug abuse may reside in groups of not less than 4 individuals;

**"(2)** to ensure that the programs are carried out in accordance with guidelines issued under subsection (c);

**"(3)** to ensure that not less than \$100,000 will be available for the revolving fund;

**"(4)** to ensure that each loan made from the revolving fund does not exceed \$4000 and that each such loan is repaid to the revolving fund not later than 2 years after the date on which the loan is made;

**"(5)** to ensure that each such loan is repaid through monthly installments and that a reasonable penalty is assessed for each failure to pay such periodic installments by the date specified in the loan agreement involved; and

**"(6)** to ensure that such loans are made only to nonprofit private entities agreeing that, in the operation of the program established pursuant to the loan—

**"(A)** the use of alcohol or any illegal drug in the housing provided by the program will be prohibited;

**"(B)** any resident of the housing who violates such prohibition will be expelled from the housing;

**"(C)** the costs of the housing, including fees for rent and utilities, will be paid by the residents of the housing; and

**"(D)** the residents of the housing will, through a majority vote of the residents, otherwise establish policies governing residence in the housing, including the manner in which applications for residence in the housing are approved.

**"(b)** For fiscal year 1990 and subsequent fiscal years, the Secretary may not make payments under section 1914 unless the State involved provides assurances satisfactory to the Secretary that the State has provided for the establishment and ongoing operation of a revolving fund in accordance with subsection (a).

**"(c)** Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Amendments Act of 1988, the Secretary, acting through the Administrator, shall issue guidelines for the operation of programs described in subsection (a)."

**APPENDIX F**  
**MODEL LOAN APPLICATION**

**APPLICATION FOR START-UP LOAN  
FOR  
A SELF-RUN, SELF-SUPPORTED RECOVERY HOUSE**

**DRAFT COPY**

Dossier No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Recovery Group \_\_\_\_\_

Address of House: \_\_\_\_\_

|      |       |          |
|------|-------|----------|
| City | State | Zip Code |
|------|-------|----------|

**Amount Requested**

Total Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Consisting of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for first month's rent;

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for security deposit

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other start-up expense

Term of repayment: 6 mos ( ) 12 mos ( ) 18 mos ( ) 24 mos ( )

**Type of House**

Term of lease: \_\_\_\_\_(years) Estimated number of residents \_\_\_\_\_

Number of beds: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of full baths: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Signatures**

The undersigned (at least one individual must sign -- use additional forms if more than four individuals are applying) hereby certify they are recovering from addiction to alcohol and or drugs and that the recovery house will be residence for four or more individuals, democratically self-run, alcohol and drug free and financially self-supporting.

Signature (A) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (B) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (C) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (D) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPLICANTS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last drink or drug use: \_\_\_\_\_ Treatment? ( ) yes ( ) no

If yes: number of times \_\_\_\_\_ Name of facility: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last drink or drug use: \_\_\_\_\_ Treatment? ( ) yes ( ) no

If yes: number of times \_\_\_\_\_ Name of facility: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last drink or drug use: \_\_\_\_\_ Treatment? ( ) yes ( ) no

If yes: number of times \_\_\_\_\_ Name of facility: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last drink or drug use: \_\_\_\_\_ Treatment? ( ) yes ( ) no

If yes: number of times \_\_\_\_\_ Name of facility: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX G**  
**1988 PROFILE OF OXFORD HOUSE RESIDENTS**

## OXFORD HOUSE RESIDENT SURVEY, SPRING 1988

The data from the Oxford House questionnaire was analyzed by and this report written by William H. Spillane, Ph.D.

### INTRODUCTION

During the Spring of 1988, the residents of all thirteen existing Oxford Houses in the Maryland, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania areas were asked to participate in a short self-administered survey. Among a total resident population of 125 adults living in the various Oxford Houses, ninety-six respondents (77 per cent) completed the questionnaire. The Oxford House resident population represents substance abuse recovery persons who are living free of alcohol consumption and other mind-altering drugs. The survey was both voluntary and confidential. Respondents were not requested to sign or identify themselves on the questionnaire.

This report is essentially descriptive of the Oxford House residents who volunteered to participate in the survey. The study findings focus on selected demographic characteristics, income, education, homeless status and sobriety information including data on detoxification and substance abuse treatment. Also, attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings and length of time residents have lived in the various Oxford Houses are examples of data collected. The marginal data described in this report were computer-generated using the SPSSX statistical package. Since the numbers of residents responding to the questionnaire in each of the Oxford Houses is small (range 3-14), the findings are presented in aggregate form for the 77 per cent participating residents.

The purpose of this exploratory survey is to describe certain characteristics of this resident population to and document the value of the Oxford House concept as a key component in the recovery process of chemically-dependent adults who have the disease of alcoholism and/or drug addiction.

### DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

The Oxford House resident population who participated in the survey is primarily male (87 per cent) and currently employed on either a full or part-time basis (84 per cent). The average gross monthly income is \$1,040. Approximately three out of ten Oxford House residents participating are young adults between the ages of 18-29 (29 per cent) and two out of five are adults between the ages of 29-39 (41 per cent) and the rest are older adults (30 per cent). The majority of participating residents (55 per cent) report no previous military service and thirteen respondents did not answer this item on the questionnaire. The race of the Oxford House residents is primarily caucasian and black (56 and 40 per cent respectively).

It is interesting to note that nearly three out of every four Oxford House respondents are single (73 per cent) and that less than one in ten (eight per cent) are married. This may indicate the absence or lack of a family support system and suggest the need and importance of a supportive group living situation such as the Oxford Houses provide for homeless men and women who are recovering from chemical dependency.

Along with high employment among the Oxford House residents, the survey indicates that the residents have completed high levels of formal education. Approximately four out of five respondents (80 per cent) have graduated from high school with slightly more than one out of three (36 per cent) having completed some college work.

The Oxford House respondents were asked to answer the survey question "How many times have you tried to get sober or straight counting this time?" Oxford House may be viewed as an integral long-term supportive component as one endeavors to achieve sobriety. Often recovering adults enter the Oxford Houses as part of a continuum of care upon discharge from detox and/or a residential treatment center and outpatient care facility. The use of the Oxford Houses represents the first time that one out of every four surveyed residents had attempted to get sober or go straight. Slightly more than one-fourth of the residents (26 per cent) had endeavored to get sober on five or more separate occasions in the past. One-half (50 per cent) of the residents surveyed have experienced continuous sobriety for at least one year. Nearly one in five respondents (18 per cent) have been sober for two years or more and approximately 14 per cent have continuous sobriety for three years or more.

Slightly less than three out of ten Oxford House residents (29 per cent) surveyed had not been admitted to detoxification for the treatment of the toxic effects of alcohol and/or other mind-altering chemicals. Detoxification programs are usually hospital-based and require that the patient be hospitalized for a short period of time. A similar proportion of Oxford House respondents (28 per cent) had been detoxed at least once, while approximately two out of every five (43 per cent) of the surveyed residents had experienced a detoxification program on two or more separate occasions.

Outpatient or residential substance abuse treatment frequently follows hospital detoxification for chemically-dependent persons. Nearly four out of five Oxford House residents surveyed (79 per cent) have experienced at least one outpatient or residential treatment for alcoholism and/or other forms of chemical abuse. Approximately three out of ten Oxford House residents (29 per cent) reported being admitted to a substance abuse treatment program on three or more separate occasions.

The Oxford House residents were asked if they had ever been homeless and how long they had been homeless. Nearly four out of ten surveyed residents (39 per cent) reported that they had experienced homelessness at some period in their lives. A significantly large proportion (20 per cent) of the Oxford House residents who answered the questionnaire reported being homeless for periods of six months or more. Slightly more than one in ten Oxford residents (12 per cent) report being homeless for one year or more.

Each resident participating in the survey was asked where he or she last lived before coming to an Oxford House. Among the residents who answered this questionnaire item, approximately one in ten (9 per cent) reported they were homeless. It is interesting to note that only five per cent reported owning their own home. The vast majority of Oxford House residents (59 per cent) noted that they rented an apartment, private room or house. Approximately 15 per cent stated that they were either hospitalized or in jail immediately prior to entering Oxford House.

Practically all surveyed residents (97 per cent) reported that Oxford House was important to their continued sobriety and recovery from alcoholism and drug abuse. An overwhelming 80 per cent stressed that Oxford House was "very important" to their substance abuse recovery and nearly all residents (99 per cent) would recommend Oxford House to other alcoholics in early recovery.

Along with living in a highly supportive environment such as an Oxford House, the vast majority of surveyed residents attend Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings on a regular basis. The Oxford House residents were asked on the questionnaire approximately how many AA and/or NA meetings they attend each week. Approximately four out of five surveyed residents (80 per cent) attend AA meetings on a regular weekly basis. Slightly more than two out of every five residents (43 per cent) report attending four or more AA meetings per week.

With respect to NA, three out of five (58 per cent) attend one or more NA meetings per week, and 25 per cent of the residents attend five or more NA meetings on a weekly basis.

Nearly half of the respondents (45 per cent) attend both AA and NA meetings. When AA and NA meetings are combined, the Oxford House respondents attend an average of six meetings per week. These are remarkable figures for a population not required by Oxford House rules to attend any meetings. No meetings are held in the houses.

Besides living in an alcohol and drug-free Oxford House environment and regular attendance at AA/NA meetings, approximately two out of every five surveyed residents (41 per cent) receive additional counseling. Practically all

respondents (96 per cent) reported their health as either "very good" or "pretty good."

Finally, the survey questionnaire addressed how long the residents have lived in an Oxford House. Approximately one-half (51 per cent) have resided in an Oxford House for nine or more continuous months. Slightly less than one-fourth (24 per cent) were relative newcomers to an Oxford House with four or fewer months in residents. Approximately ten per cent had lived in an Oxford House for three years or more.

### SUMMARY

The data in this study are relatively unique since they have been obtained from a substance abuse recovery population. The overall participant rate for this self-administered study is an outstanding 77 per cent. A total of 96 recovering adults participated in the survey. Most of the questionnaire items were adequately completed. The Oxford House operation provides a unique kind of support system for substance abuse recovering persons who may have limited family support. It is interesting to note that only eight married persons participated in the survey. Oxford Houses rely heavily upon AA and NA for recovery. The majority of residents tended to be educated and gainfully employed. The residents, with the help of the Oxford Houses and outside support such as AA, NA, and professional counseling have overcome considerable adversities such as active alcoholism, homelessness, arrests, etc., and are successfully experiencing recovery.

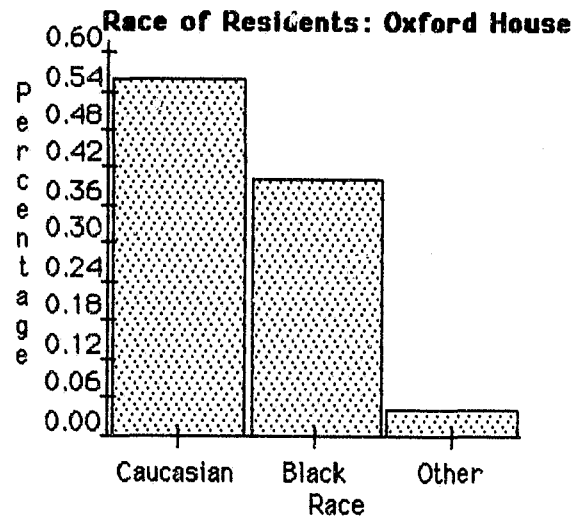
The data in this survey strong suggest that the Oxford Houses have made a considerable contribution in assisting the suffering alcoholic and/or drug abuser to get back on his feet and again experience independence and become gainfully employed. The more persons whom the Oxford Houses can help achieve recovery, the greater will be the number of recovered persons who will be there to assist the newly-recovering alcoholic or drug abuser.

**Selected Data From the Spring 1988 Survey**

**Oxford House  
Spring 1988  
Survey**

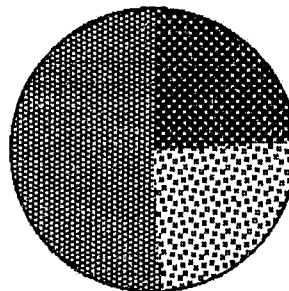


- *Before Coming to Oxford House-- 20% had been homeless for at least six months*
- *26 % had tried to get sober 5 or more times before "making it" in an Oxford House*



- *Oxford House Residents attend on average six AA or NA meetings a Week*

Length of Stay-Oxford House Survey



|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| less than 4 months | 24.0% |
| 4-9 months         | 25.0% |
| 9 months or more   | 51.0% |

**"Length of stay" is how long a resident had been in Oxford House at time of survey.**

**APPENDIX H**  
**ADAMHA/OXFORD HOUSE CONFERENCE PROGRAM**



**A Two-Day National ADAMHA Conference**  
**The Self-Run, Self-Supported Recovery House Program**  
***Recovery, Responsibility, Replication***

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**Technical Assistance For State Officials**

- Establishing the Revolving Fund
  - The Oxford House Model
  - Starting Self-Run, Self-Supported Houses
  - Making Loans
  - Repayment with Quality Control
  - Measuring Success
- 

August 7 & 8, 1989

Washington, D.C.

Washington Court Hotel on Capitol Hill  
525 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
1-800-321-3010

Monday August 7, 1989

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Registration. Coffee and pastries

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Ballroom West Meeting Room -Welcoming Remarks by Glenn Kamber for ADAMHA and J. Paul Molloy for Oxford House

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM *The Concept of Self-Run, Self-Supported Recovery Houses*

A Panel to set the stage for understanding how the self-run, self-supported recovery house fits in the treatment picture. Each speaker will present a 5 minute opening statement followed by discussion and questions from the audience.

Moderator

Linda Lewis Deputy Assistant Secretary Florida Dept of Health & Rehabilitative Services

Panelists

Riley Regan, Director New Jersey Division of Alcoholism

Fr. Peter Young, Albany, New York, pioneer in alcoholism drug treatment

Dr. Ian Macdonald, former Presidential Advisor on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

William Spillane, Ph. D. Catholic University, former Associate Director NIDA, Evaluation of Oxford House for U.S.Department of Labor

11:00 AM-12:15 PM *Implementing the Concept -- The Role of States and Communities*

A panel to discuss what they have done to prepare their communities or start-up and replication of self-run, self-supported recovery houses. Each speaker will have a 5 minute opening statement followed by discussion and questions from the audience.

Moderator

Michael Couty, Deputy Director of Field Services, Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Panelists

Susan Giles, Executive Director, Kansas City Task Force on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Tim Mailly, Vermont Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs

Dennis McCarty, Assistant Director Massachusetts Division of Substance Abuse Services

J. Paul Molloy, Co-founder, Oxford House, Inc.

12:30 PM - 1:45 PM LUNCH - Ballroom Center, Washington Court Hotel

Speaker: Dr. Herb Kleber , Deputy Director-Designate for Demand Reduction, Office of National Drug Control Policy Introduction of Dr. Kleber by Karst Besteman, Executive Director, Alcohol and Drug Problems Association of North America

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM *Death of Zoning Barriers: Implications of the Federal Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988*

Panel of experts on the new Fair Housing Act discuss the importance of the new law in encouraging the mass replication of recovery housing.

Moderator

Sam Shull, Director of Housing, State of Virginia.

Panelists

Paul Hancock, Esq, Chief, Housing and Civil Enforcement Section , U.S. Department of Justice

Linda Zazove, Esq, Land of Lincoln Legal Services, East St. Louis, Illinois

Edwin W. Holden, Esq. General Counsel and Co-founder of Oxford House

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM *How the Concept Works -- Hearing from Oxford House Residents*

Panel of current or recent Oxford House residents with John O'Neill, a Co-founder of Oxford House as Moderator. Each resident will briefly describe their own background and how they got into an Oxford House. Questions will be invited from conference participants.

4:15 PM- 8:00 PM *Bus tour to several Oxford Houses*

Buffet Supper will be served at two of the Oxford Houses. Both Women's and Men's Houses will be visited. Buses return to hotel at 8:00 PM.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 1989

8:30 AM-9:00AM *Coffee and Pastries*

9:00 AM-10:30 AM - Montpelier Room *Starting a New Oxford House: How to do it from current and recent residents*

A panel of Oxford House residents and alumnae who have started individual Oxford Houses discuss the steps that need to be taken to find a suitable house, lease it, furnish it and get the first residents necessary to fill it.

Moderator

J. Paul Molloy, Co-founder Oxford House

Panelists

John V. O'Neill, Co-founder Oxford House

Susan DiGiovanni, alumna Oxford House

A group of current and recent residents of Oxford Houses

10:30 AM-11:30 AM *Establishing a Workable State Revolving Fund*

Charles vander Burgh, Chief Financial Officer and Paul Molloy will describe options for establishing a state revolving fund. Written material and visual aids will be used and those states that already have a fund will be invited to share their experience with the audience

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Lunch on Your Own

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM *How Oxford House, Inc. Can Help.*

Panel of Oxford House officials to discuss the various ways it can help make the revolving fund accomplish the intended purpose of self-run, self-supported recovery house replication.

Community Awareness: Ideas for involving the community in advance to be supportive of the recovery house establishment and replication.

Seeding a Locality: Start-up of cluster of Oxford Houses to provide an example for the local recovery community and a pool of local "experts" to replicate self-run, self-support houses sufficiently to meet whatever demand exists.

Loan Approval: Approval and timing of loans in a way to permit rental of housing. Specific emphasis will be placed on the use of "bridge loans" in order to permit timely access to money necessary to rent a house.

Loan Repayment: The advantages of the OHI collection program which couples repayment collection and quality control. Specific tips on what to do about bad debts.

Data Capture: Methods to utilize the opportunity to encourage detailed data collection from residents of self-run, self-supported recovery houses -- as a tool for evaluating the effect of such houses on the recovery process.

3:00 p.m. - CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

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***SAMHSA***