

How Oxford Houses Help The Criminal Justice System

- ❖ **As many as 70% of the jail cells in the country are occupied by drug addicts or alcoholics.**
- ❖ **Recidivism for drug addicts and alcoholics is over 50% in the first 18 months after release.**
- ❖ **Oxford House living gives the recovering drug addicts and alcoholics the opportunity to stay clean and sober.**
- ❖ **Oxford Houses provide a place to live different from where one had lived before having problems with the criminal justice system.**
- ❖ **Living in an Oxford House provides the time, peer support and self-confidence to assure long-term sobriety without relapse.**
- ❖ **Oxford House chapters work with Judges to help everyone find a place to become comfortable in sobriety without relapse.**

Sample Cost Comparisons

The average annual cost to the public for an individual in jail ranges from \$23,000 to \$50,000 per year.

The average annual cost to maintain a bed in a halfway house is about \$23,000 per year.

The average annual cost per bed in the typical therapeutic community ranges from \$18,000 to \$26,000 per year.

Residents in an Oxford House pay the cost of their own expenses. The cost to start an Oxford House is about \$30,000 and once established it costs about \$1,200 per year to keep a house on track with continuing technical assistance from the Oxford House umbrella organization.

Oxford House, Inc. Questions and Answers

Q. How can Oxford Houses help drug addicts and alcoholics facing the criminal justice system?

A. By providing a structured, supportive living environment focused on recovery and the development of values and behavior centered around individual responsibility and lifelong abstinence from the use of alcohol and drugs.

Q. How can Oxford Houses be established to serve those who are willing to recover from alcoholism or drug addiction?

A. Three factors characterize Oxford Houses: (1) all Oxford Houses are rented family houses in good neighborhoods; (2) trained outreach workers from Oxford House are available to establish houses and train the residents to utilize the standardize Oxford system of operations, and (3) state recovery house revolving loans are available to provide funds to rent a suitable house to establish a new Oxford House.

Q. What is the Recovery Home Revolving Loan Fund?

A. Most states have a revolving loan fund to make start-up loans so that six or more recovering individuals can borrow up to \$4,000 to establish an Oxford House. If your state does not have a recovery home revolving loan fund, ask the state alcohol and drug agency to start one.

Q. How expensive is it to get a trained Oxford House outreach worker to find a suitable house and train the residents?

A. The average one-time cost for technical assistance to establish an Oxford House is about \$30,000 – and about \$1,200 a year thereafter.

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

A. Yes and many of the more than 1,600 Oxford Houses established since 1989 have a working relationship with drug courts and correctional treatment programs.

Oxford House™



Working With Drug Courts and Correctional Facilities

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

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

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

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

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

This pamphlet “Working With Drug Courts and Correctional Facilities” discusses how establishment of local networks of Oxford Houses can reduce recidivism.

Internet Address:
www.oxfordhouse.org

Recovering From Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Alcoholism and drug addiction are chronic and progressive problems. The alcoholic and drug addict become “hooked” on their drug of choice and physically all cells in their bodies call out for a steady supply of the drug. This physical compulsion causes the mind to trigger any kind of behavior needed to get the next drink of alcohol or other drug “fix.” Once addicted the only “cure” is total abstinence -- stopping the use of the alcohol and drugs -- forever.

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

Short-term custody -- in a hospital setting or a supervised detoxification facility or a jail cell-- is the usual way to stop an addict’s compulsive use of alcohol and drugs. Staying stopped is the more difficult challenge, but Oxford Houses can help.

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

Government grants or contributions help fund the establishment of new Oxford Houses and an intake system that permits Oxford Houses to accept referred individuals. The initial one-time cost to get a new Oxford House started is about \$30,000. Once started, a small annual service charge keeps the houses on track.



Staying Stopped

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

From Tradition One
Oxford House Manual ©

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

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

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are twelve step programs that have helped millions of recovering addicts to change their behavior to adopt lifelong abstinence. Unfortunately, many recovering individuals need more support than AA and NA alone. Oxford Houses provide the additional support and the time to learn new behavior.

Over 80% of those who live in an Oxford House stay clean and sober.



How Oxford Houses Work

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

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

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

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

The availability of start-up loans makes it possible to start new houses. The machinery is in place to provide groups of six or more recovering individuals with the money to rent a house to start a new Oxford House.

Technical assistance is required but already a number of courts and correctional systems have made grants to Oxford House central services to get the technical assistance need to establish Oxford Houses. The initial one time cost to start and service an Oxford House is about \$30,000. Once started the residents pay household expenses and the annual cost to keep the houses “on track” is less than \$1,200 per year.

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