

## **D.1 CONSISTENCY WITH THE THREE-YEAR PROGRAM & EXPENDITURE PLAN**

The New Genesis Apartments project is consistent with the Los Angeles County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Services and Supports (CSS) Plan in its commitment to providing permanent supportive housing with services designed to promote recovery, wellness, and resilience, to reduce disparities in access to services, to serve chronically homeless adults who are struggling with mental illness together with substance abuse or other disorders, and to collaborate with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental health and a wide range of community-based organizations.

To this end, the New Genesis Apartments project provides permanent, safe, affordable, subsidized housing to individuals with significant challenges including homelessness, severe and persistent mental illness, and co-occurring disorders. The program aims to foster residential stability, independence, development of robust social support systems, and positive life choices through the provision of recovery-oriented integrated services and wellness activities that are client-driven and strength-focused. Ultimately, the program seeks to create an environment where residents with serious mental illness and other disabilities receive the information, treatment, and support they need to maintain their housing and gain a sense of mastery over their lives and illness. To meet each resident's unique constellation of needs, the supportive housing program at the New Genesis combines on- and off-site services that include but are not limited to intensive case management and services coordination, benefits advocacy, primary and specialty medical care, mental health and substance abuse services, as well as educational, occupational, employment and volunteer services, and a wide range of activities, groups, and training opportunities organized and implemented by both residents and staff.

## **D.2 DESCRIPTION OF TARGET POPULATION TO BE SERVED**

The New Genesis will provide 106 affordable housing units, 79 of these units will offer permanent supportive housing to disabled single adults who are homeless. Rents for these units will be subsidized through the Section 8 Project-Based Voucher program. Eighteen of these subsidized units will be reserved for MHSA eligible individuals. New Genesis residents in the 18 MHSA units will be adults with a severe and persistent mental illness; whose income does not exceed 30% of Area Median Income;<sup>1</sup> and who may struggle with other challenges including, for example, substance abuse or another co-occurring disorder, frequent hospital and emergency room use, or a history of incarceration.

## **D.3 TENANT SELECTION PLAN**

The SRHT Property Management Company (PMC), a non-profit affiliate of Skid

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<sup>1</sup> Although the income threshold for the New Genesis project is set at 40% of Area Median Income, in reality, the income of the vast majority of homeless individuals with serious disabilities living in our buildings is significantly below this threshold.

Row Housing Trust (the Trust), is responsible for operational oversight and management of all Trust buildings. PMC staff will conduct all lease-up activities for the New Genesis Apartments. The PMC will work in conjunction with the Trust's Resident Services Coordinators to review applications on a case-by-case basis and interview applicants.

All successful applicants for MHSA units in the New Genesis Apartments must meet the eligibility criteria set forth by both the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) for the MHSA Housing program and by HUD for the Shelter Plus Care program. The Los Angeles County Tenant Certification Process will be followed. To ensure equal access and opportunity, no one will be denied an opportunity to apply for housing.

### **Referral Sources**

Prospective tenants will be referred primarily by local public and community-based human service organizations. It is expected that numerous referrals will be made by mental health providers including referrals from the master Referral List maintained by DMH's Housing Policy & Development Unit, DMH's directly operated Downtown Mental Health clinic, the Full Service Partnership program, Lamp Community, Downtown Women's Center, and JWCH Institute. Additional referral sources are emergency shelters including those operated at the Union Rescue Mission, Los Angeles Mission, Midnight Mission, and New Image Shelter as well as from other social service providers including Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles, St. Vincent's Cardinal Manning Center, Chrysalis, Weingart Association, Volunteers of America, and others.

### **Referral Process**

During initial lease-up of the New Genesis Apartments, referring agencies may refer applicants to the New Genesis Leasing Office. After the initial lease-up of the building, interested applicants should inquire at the Skid Row Housing Trust Tenant Services office. Individuals who have been certified MHSA eligible should either provide a copy of their certification or provide the leasing personnel with this information so that it may be confirmed. Prospective residents who receive DMH services but who are not yet certified for MHSA housing will be referred to their DMH provider to complete the certification process. The DMH provider will then be responsible for forwarding the necessary paperwork to the Housing Policy & Development Unit for processing. Skid Row Housing Trust has met with staff from DMH's Skid Row Management Team and has established a referral protocol.

### **Initial Lease-up Process**

#### Affirmative Marketing and Outreach

##### *Market Areas*

The overall market area is Los Angeles County, with special attention to SPA 4. The communities and neighborhoods in close proximity to the New Genesis Apartments

are the specific market areas. MHSA applicants throughout the County are eligible.  
*Affirmative Marketing Defined*

Affirmative marketing essentially means casting a broad net to inform all potentially eligible persons about the affordable housing opportunities the Trust offers. It means making special efforts to reach those persons identified as least likely to apply. Affirmative marketing of projects leasing for the first time and of vacant units in operating buildings creates the maximum number of opportunities for all persons to apply, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, familial status, disability or any other arbitrary factor. No group or person who otherwise meets the basic eligibility criteria is favored or excluded from the marketing program.

The PMC will conduct an extensive affirmative marketing outreach campaign. Outreach for the New Genesis Apartments will include disseminating information describing the building, how to apply for occupancy, eligibility requirements, date of anticipated initial occupancy, and a description of supportive housing services available, by the means set forth below. Marketing of these units will include the following:

- Establishing contact with social service agencies that primarily serve the target population and holding informational meetings to ensure that the availability of housing for individuals with a history of mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, co-occurring disorders, and histories of chronic homelessness is known throughout the service provider network;
- Establishing secondary contacts with social service agencies that may provide services to the target population and holding informational meetings as needed;
- Notifying DMH's directly operated Downtown Mental Health clinic and DMH's Housing Policy & Development Unit.
- Notifying other nonprofit housing operators who do not have sufficient permanent, affordable housing options for persons with histories of substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, or co-occurring disorders;
- Notifying special needs clearinghouses of the availability of housing at the New Genesis Apartments;
- Providing information for distribution at churches, parks, markets, and community centers; and
- Conducting special outreach by Tenant Services staff who will personally contact agencies and organizations serving those who may be least likely to apply or have the most the most difficulty in applying.

Informational flyers in bullet point format will describe the project and will be distributed to the types of agencies and organizations described above. Building amenities, tenant services, and eligibility criteria will be highlighted in the notices. All advertising shall include a reference to "Equal Housing Opportunity."

## MHSA Outreach

DMH will be notified of the New Genesis' opening and referrals provided through the MHSA Housing Tenant Referral List will be contacted. As noted above, individuals who may be MHSA Housing eligible but have not been certified will be provided with the necessary paperwork and then referred to DMH to complete the certification process.

## Lease-up Schedule

Marketing efforts will begin 90 days prior to expected construction completion. Eligible applicants will be interviewed and approved for tenancy approximately 15-30 days prior to initial occupancy. Occupancy will commence as soon the project's final inspection is approved by the Department of Building and Safety.

## Leasing Office

Prior to the Trust's final acceptance of the building from the building contractor, the Trust will establish a lease-up office. Applicants may also complete applications at the Trust's Tenant Services office located at 108 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The lease-up office will be open to applicants Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Friday 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., closed from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## Lease-up timeline

- 90-60 days prior to occupancy – Outreach to service providers
- 60-30 days prior to occupancy – Informational meetings with providers
- 60 days prior to occupancy – Establish leasing office
- 30 days prior to occupancy – Conduct on-site tour/open house
- 30 days prior to occupancy – Start interviews and approve initial tenants
- 0-30 days following occupancy – Move-in initial applicants
- 0-90/120 days following occupancy – Achieve 100% qualified occupancy

## **Tenant Selection Criteria**

<b>Tenant Affordability Requirements</b>			
<b>Income Level</b>	<b># of Units</b>	<b>Type of Unit</b>	<b>Capital Funds &amp; Operating Subsidy Source</b>
30%	18	Supportive Housing; Homeless or Chronically Homeless	Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)

## **Resident Selection**

The Trust shall abide by the following resident selection provisions.

- a. Lease units in compliance with applicable Grant and/or Regulatory Agreements and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (e.g., MHSA Housing Program and Shelter Plus Care).
- b. Assure that occupancy shall be open to all eligible applicants, regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or other arbitrary factors.
- c. Notify applicants of their eligibility status, and advise rejected or ineligible applicants of the right to appeal by providing them with a copy of the Grievance and Appeal Procedure that is a part of the Management Plan.
- d. Carry out resident selection without favoritism or partiality and serve the public interest at all times.
- e. Provide each selected resident, at the time of acceptance, a written copy of the approved Grievance and Appeal Procedure.

After the building has been fully occupied, persons interested in living in a Skid Row Housing Trust building – including the New Genesis Apartments – may pick up an application from the Trust’s Tenant Services office located at 108 E. Fifth Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013. The office is open Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., Friday 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### Distributing and Monitoring Applications

When interested persons collect an application, they sign for the application in the *Pick-up Application Log*. The Log notes the application number, date provided, and the recipient’s current address and contact number.

### Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made for interested persons, including MHSA applicants, who are disabled or elderly and cannot pick up an application in person. The application packet will be mailed. PMC staff must obtain and note the action in the Pick-up Application Log.

### Application Packet Contents

The Application Packet is comprised of the following:

1. The Rental Application for Special Programs.
2. The Resident Selection Criteria list to help potential applicants understand how their application is screened and the standards used by the Trust to evaluate their eligibility and suitability as residents.

3. The list of verification information applicants are required to provide:
- a photo identification card (e.g. California DMV driver's license or ID card),
  - a social security card,
  - pay stubs for employed persons,
  - names and addresses for all other sources of income or depositories of assets (e.g., General Relief or SSI),
  - TB test results for a test administered within the last 6 months or one year for chest x-rays.

Staff will provide applicants with information about how to obtain the required documentation. Individuals working with service providers in the community or those with DMH SFPRs (Single Fixed Point of Responsibility) will be encouraged to enlist assistance from these providers.

### **Application Submission and Initial Interview**

Prospective tenants should bring a completed Housing application and MHSA Certification Application to the Lease-up/Tenant Services office. If the MHSA Certification Application has not been approved, it will be forwarded to DMH for certification. If staff is available, an initial application review and interview will be conducted. If staff is not available, an appointment will be made.

Prospective residents' applications are first reviewed for completeness. Staff will request missing information or ask for clarification if necessary. Copies of the documents noted above will be made. Applicants will also be asked to sign income and asset verification forms authorizing release of information by the appropriate sources or depositories.

If applying at Tenant Services, the Trust's various housing options and their associated eligibility requirements will then be reviewed (i.e., Shelter Plus Care [SPC], Section 8, MHSA Housing, and unsubsidized units). The choice of housing type dictates what additional information the applicant will be required to provide. MHSA units require DMH certification as well as Shelter Plus Care's requirement of third party verification of both homeless and disability status. Applicants eligible for and interested in the New Genesis will be directed to the Lease-up office for further processing. If applying at the New Genesis lease-up office, the application will be reviewed specifically for its program requirements.

During the initial application review and interview, prospective residents who appear to be eligible for the New Genesis Apartments will be given homeless and disability verification forms. Applicants who are working with DMH but who are not yet MHSA certified will be referred to their mental health provider. In order for a second interview to be scheduled, these forms must be completed and verification of the applicant's income must be received. Third party income verifications are effective for

90 days. Verifications of homelessness and disability are effective for 30 days. Interviews are conducted by PMC and Resident Services staff.

## **Selection Criteria**

General and specific criteria are used to select tenants after all interview and reference check information has been taken into consideration and applied consistently and fairly to all candidates.

As an experienced housing first organization, Skid Row Housing Trust recognizes that given the life circumstances of those applying for housing, many will have histories that include a variety of the conditions below. For example, prospective tenants may have histories of incarceration, difficulties consistently paying rent on time, negative credit histories, and so on. Consequently, each prospective tenant's application and history is reviewed on an individual basis. Reasonable accommodations are frequently made.

The general criteria for MHSA restricted units are as follows:

1. Capacity to live independently with necessary supportive services.
2. Ability to pay monthly rent on time and provide the initial security deposit.
3. Income eligibility – gross income at or below 30% of the area median and the source verified.
4. Eligibility under applicable regulatory requirements (e.g., MHSA Housing program, State of California HCD, Section 8, AHP, SPC, and tax credit programs).

These general criteria are then broken down into the following specific criteria:

1. Applicant's ratio of rent-to-income should not exceed 75%. The Trust may accept applicants with a higher rent-to-income level if they can demonstrate a verified history of successfully paying rent when there was a similar rent-to-income ratio. This record may be used as a mitigating circumstance when evaluating this criterion.
2. Applicant must not be a full-time student who is not eligible to file a joint federal income tax return. This is a California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) provision.
3. Negative rental history may be grounds for rejection, including:
  - a. Applicant owes delinquent rent or fees for damages to current or former landlords;
  - b. Recurring problems with late rent payments;

- c. Recurring disturbance problems during tenancy where the tenant showed him or herself to be inconsiderate, violent or abusive towards other tenants or management personnel including a history of behavioral problems related to alcohol and/or drug use and/or drug sales.
  - d. Applicant was evicted for cause, within the past seven years;
4. Other grounds for rejection include:
- a. Negative credit history, including applicant having declared bankruptcy within the past 5 years.
  - b. The unit the applicant is applying for would not be the applicant's sole residence.
  - c. Applicant's household size exceeds the occupancy limits for the unit.
  - d. Applicant has submitted an incomplete application and has not taken steps to remedy.
  - e. Applicant has provided false, inconsistent or inaccurate information on his/her application.
  - f. Applicant had two unexcused failures to attend an agreed-upon time for an application appointment or interview.
  - g. Applicant was abusive or uncooperative with management during the application process when asked to provide required information or documentation.
  - h. Applicant has a felony conviction record which management concludes indicates a problem of character that would not be compatible with the well-being and safety of other residents and staff of the residential hotel.

In selecting applicants to be tenants at any Skid Row Housing Trust hotel, there shall be no discrimination based on race, religion, place of national origin, age, disability, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or any other arbitrary factor.

#### Special Accommodations

The applications of MHSA eligible individuals will be carefully reviewed by PMC and Resident Services staff. Many applicants' history may contain one or more of the aforementioned grounds for rejection. As noted above, Skid Row Housing Trust is an experienced housing first operator. As such, staff are familiar with the challenges prospective applicants may have. If a second interview is scheduled, these issues will be thoroughly evaluated and staff will work with referring agency to assist in the determining whether a special accommodation can be made. SFPR can assist potential tenants with reasonable accommodation requests.

## Final Interview

Applicants who are approved by PMC and Resident Services staff will then work with staff to complete the Housing Authority of Los Angeles' (HACLA) paperwork. Once completed, an interview with HACLA will be arranged. Prospective tenants may arrange a move-in date as soon as they are given a letter of eligibility by HACLA.

## **Ineligible Applicants**

If information gathered during this process clearly indicates that the applicant is not eligible for the New Genesis Apartments or other housing in a Skid Row Housing Trust building (i.e. over-income), the individual will be provided with an *Unable to Accommodate Letter*.

- If an applicant is rejected on the basis of income, referrals will be made.
- If an applicant is rejected for a reason based on a credit or eviction report, the "Credit Information" or "Eviction Information" box will be checked indicating the reason for disapproval. The box listing the name, address and phone number of the reporting company will also be checked. This gives the applicant an opportunity to directly contact the reporting company to correct any misinformation if they believe that the credit or eviction information the Trust relied upon for denying their application is erroneous. (Should the applicant produce documentation that the information was incorrect, the Trust will reconsider their application.)
- All application-related documentation and a copy of the written notification for each rejected application is archived for at least five years.

## **Waiting Lists**

### Placing Applicants on Waiting Lists

In the process of leasing a new project, there are normally more applicants than there are units. In this case only, there is no limit to the number of names that may be placed on the waiting list.

Applicants' ranks on the *Applicant Waiting List* are based on the date and time their application was accepted. Applicants who have been on the waiting list the longest period of time are highest on the list. No one may alter the ranking of a household on the Applicant Waiting List except by the procedures specified below.

Applicants on the waiting list are given an *Applicant Waiting List* letter informing them of the type of unit they have applied for and their rank on the list. They are asked to inform the Trust if their contact information changes.

To ensure that the New Genesis Apartments are always fully occupied, a list of

names of interested applicants is kept. When a unit is vacated, individuals on the waiting list are contacted in the order they appear on the list. Individuals on this list and their referring agency are contacted twice a year to determine their continued interest in Trust housing. Referring agencies will be contacted when individual applicants cannot be reached.

In the event that the waiting list needs to be augmented, affirmative marketing will be conducted. DMH will be contacted as part of this process to ensure that MHSA eligible candidates on the DMH Master List are notified. Skid Row Housing Trust's commitment is to provide housing to 18 MHSA eligible residents. It is the Trust's aim to provide housing to significantly more than 18 MHSA eligible residents so that there are always a minimum of 18 MHSA eligible tenants in residence.

#### Drawing Names from Applicant Waiting Lists

When a unit becomes available, the applicant at the top of the waiting list (based on the date and time of application receipt) will be contacted. Three documented attempts to reach the individual by phone will be made. If contact is not made, the individual will be removed from the list. Attempts to contact the next person on the list using the same procedures will be made until positive responses are received. After two rejections of offers of housing, the individual's application is placed at the bottom of the waiting list.

#### Appeals

Residents who believe that their rights or status have been adversely affected by Trust or PMC staff or if residents believe that their lease agreements have been violated, they are entitled to a hearing in accordance with the agency's grievance and appeal procedure. Prospective residents who are not accepted into housing also have the right to request a hearing. The full appeal policy will be included in the management plan. MHSA residents will be directed to their SFPR to be informed about the DMH grievance process.

### **D.4            SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PLAN**

#### **D.4.1        DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES**

##### **D.4.1a      Primary Service Delivery Location/Service Overview**

Skid Row Housing Trust (the Trust) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit housing, community development, and social services organization dedicated to strengthening the residential community of Skid Row by providing permanent, affordable, independent living opportunities to homeless and very low-income individuals. The primary service location for the proposed MHSA project is the Trust's New Genesis Apartments, located at 452-458 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013 in the Skid Row neighborhood of Downtown Los Angeles (Los Angeles County SPA 4/Supervisory District 2).

The New Genesis Apartments project is designed to provide permanent supportive housing for adults who are low income, at-risk of homelessness, homeless, or chronically homeless and may be living with at least one of the following disabilities: mental illness, substance abuse, or HIV/AIDS. Seventy-eight efficiency and one one-bedroom units will be subsidized through HUD's Section 8 Project-Based Voucher program. Eighteen of these subsidized efficiency units will be reserved for MHPA eligible individuals. To best meet the unique needs of each tenant in an MHPA supported unit, comprehensive case management and other supportive services will be provided by one FTE on-site Trust Residential Services Coordinator (RSC) who will work as part of a team, facilitating access to a wide array of community-based programs including primary medical care, employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, life skills programs, and mental health services.

#### **D.4.1b Service Provider Experience**

The Trust will be the primary service provider at the New Genesis Apartments, offering on-site services and facilitating access to off-site services including coordination with MHPA residents' SFPRs. It is anticipated that the SFPR for the majority of MHPA eligible residents at the New Genesis will be the Downtown DMH Clinic and the full service partnership program. The Trust has extensive experience providing integrated supportive services in permanent housing for homeless individuals living with disabilities. Since its inception in 1989, the Trust has acquired, renovated, or built 21 properties in the Skid Row neighborhood, providing over 1,400 units of permanent affordable housing for the city's poorest residents. Today, the Trust is one of the largest providers of service-enriched, permanent housing for homeless individuals with special needs in Los Angeles.

In its current portfolio, 765 of the Trust's units are set aside for individuals with disabilities. Of these 765 units, 115 units are for individuals with HIV/AIDS and 176 units are specifically for individuals with mental illness. In addition, 211 units of Trust housing are for residents with a history of chronic homelessness. Further, the Trust administers the largest sponsor-based SPC rental subsidy contract in Los Angeles. Residents of the New Genesis Apartments will benefit significantly from the SPC program. Residents receiving \$850.00 per month through SSI, for example, will pay 30% or approximately \$255.00 of their monthly gross income in rent. The remainder of their rent will be paid through the SPC program.

In response to the challenges experienced by many residents, the Trust formed its Residential Services Program in 1993. Since that time, the Trust has refined its approach to service delivery and expanded the array of services provided. In 2003, as lead agency of the Skid Row Collaborative (SRC), the Trust was awarded one of eleven Chronic Homeless Initiative (CHI) grants sponsored by the Federal government's Interagency Council on the Homeless. Designed as a community-wide strategy to address the needs of chronically homeless individuals with disabilities, the SRC brought together thirteen partners, including the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles,

the County Department of Mental Health, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the VA Greater Los Angeles Comprehensive Healthcare System, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Corporation of Supportive Housing, and seven nonprofit service providers to coordinate and deliver mental health, recovery, medical and other social services in permanent affordable housing for chronically homeless and disabled persons. The focal point for the CHI project was the Trust's 86 unit St. George Hotel. Although the CHI program ended in 2006, the SRC continues to operate at the St. George Hotel. It also continues to receive extensive national and local recognition as a highly successful and innovative services-in-housing model.

Given the demonstrated effectiveness of the SRC, the Trust implemented similar models of service provision at the Rainbow Apartments in 2006 (an 87 unit building dedicated to serving chronically homeless individuals with mental illness) and at the Abbey Apartments in December 2008 (a 113 unit building with 100 units set aside for chronically homeless individuals with disabilities; 89 of these units are specifically for individuals living with mental illness).

Permanent supportive housing that is highly responsive to its residents requires close collaboration between the on-site service providers and its property managers. Operational oversight and management of all Trust buildings is the responsibility of the SRHT Property Management Company (PMC), a non-profit affiliate of the Trust. Founded in 1995 specifically to provide property management services in a sensitive manner to residents with disabilities, the PMC ensures that the Trust's buildings are professionally managed, well maintained, and responsive to resident needs and concerns. PMC staff for the New Genesis Apartments will include a field supervisor, hotel manager, assistant manager, two desk clerks as well as maintenance and janitorial crews. Staff will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The cooperative working relationship between the Trust's residential services staff and the PMC's on-site management staff contributes significantly to the Trust's successful provision of service-enriched housing for residents with disabilities and long histories of homelessness. This collaboration is maintained through participation by PMC and residential services staff in weekly on-site supportive housing meetings. (This aspect of the program's operations is discussed in more detail Section D.4.5 below.)

#### **D.4.1c Description of Proposed Services**

##### Summary

The supportive services program offered at the New Genesis Apartments will serve 18 adult MHSA-eligible individuals. Increasing residential stability, supporting self-determination, and maximizing independence are important guiding principles of the program. These overarching goals are achieved by developing positive, trusting relationships between service staff and residents, engaging in a resident-driven assessment and goal setting process, and providing directly or through referral a wide array of supportive social services and community-building activities. Services include but are not limited to comprehensive case management, primary and specialty medical

care, psychiatric services and mental health counseling, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders treatment, employment and legal assistance, life skills groups, peer run support groups and activities, and benefits advocacy. Community-building and socialization activities range from monthly community meetings and field trips to weekly interest-oriented groups such as gardening, cooking, and art groups.

Each resident will be an individual lease holder, reside in a Section 8 subsidized efficiency unit, and pay 30% of their gross monthly income in rent. Although each resident will be assigned an RSC, housing is not contingent upon participation in services. A licensed clinical social worker is available to respond to mental health crises, provide aftercare, and coordinate follow-up services with the on-site services team. The New Genesis is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week ensuring resident access to assistance at all times.

The New Genesis Apartment complex was designed to facilitate both the delivery of supportive services and community-building activities. Throughout its 20 year history as an affordable housing developer, the Trust has routinely solicited feedback from residents about the buildings in which they live. They have provided comment on everything from the amount of outdoor space available to ideal closet configurations. To the extent possible, their suggestions have been incorporated into our building designs. All units are either handicap accessible or adaptable. Private supportive service offices ensure tenant confidentiality. A large conference room provides space for psycho-educational and peer support groups as well as other small group activities. A large community room, community kitchen, and outdoor courtyard offer space for community meetings and community-building events. The New Genesis is convenient to public transportation; a wide variety of social services and leisure activities are within easy walking distance.

#### On-site and community-based services

The Trust's Residential Services program includes on-site case management, life skills groups and workshops, and community-building activities. Access to a variety of off-site services is arranged according to the needs and interests of each resident. Private meeting space will be made available for staff from partnering agencies who are able to make services available on-site. A detailed description of the Trust's approach to providing services is presented in Section D.4.1d. Key service components are described below.

##### ➤ *Case management/Service coordination*

The New Genesis MHSA program will be staffed by a one FTE on-site MHSA Resident Services Coordinator (RSC) who will be part of a services team. To the extent possible, the team will reflect the ethnic and cultural composition of the resident population. Each new MHSA resident will be assigned to the MHSA RSC who will work with MHSA residents in concert with the residents' Single Fixed Point of Responsibility (SFPR). The RSC will be responsible for providing comprehensive case management services and facilitating residents' access to community-based services. The RSC will

meet formally with residents bi-weekly or as needed, conduct initial and on-going assessments, update individual service plans, coordinate resident care with providers in the community, and offer on-site psycho-educational, life skills, and interest-oriented groups as well as socialization activities. The MHSA RSC will also work with residents to develop resident-run groups and activities. Community building activities are frequently organized with the goal of developing cohesive community among all residents.

➤ *Health care services*

The Trust has a longstanding partnership with JWCH Institute, a Los Angeles leader in homeless healthcare. In the spring of 2009, JWCH opened a state-of-the-art 20,000 sq. ft. Community Health Center at 522 South San Pedro Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013 (1/2 a mile from the New Genesis). The Health Center is designed to integrate care across disciplines including many Los Angeles County departments (i.e., the Departments of Health Services, Public Health, Mental Health, and Public Social Services). JWCH's goal is to provide a medical home for its patients where services across disciplines are seamlessly integrated. At the Center, New Genesis residents may receive preventative, primary, and specialty healthcare, dental services, psychiatric and mental health counseling, medication management, substance abuse treatment, and recuperative care if necessary.

In addition, JWCH offers a special women's wellness clinic at the Downtown Women's Center (DWC). Currently, the DWC is located 4 blocks from the New Genesis (at 325 South Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013). In Spring 2010, the DWC will relocate to a newly renovated facility complete with an expanded women's clinic. The new home of DWC is less than ½ a mile from the New Genesis Apartments (456 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013).

➤ *Mental health services*

The service team will receive extensive training from qualified professionals on effective ways of working collaboratively and creatively with mentally ill individuals as well as those with co-occurring disorders. Trainers include psychiatrists, licensed clinical psychologists, social workers and certified substance abuse specialists who are drawn from area universities and the local provider community. As discussed in more detail in Section D.4.4, staff are trained in motivational interviewing techniques and use of the Stages of Change model. Many of the groups and activities organized by the RSCs are designed to help individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders better understand their disabilities, stabilize in housing, participate in the building's community, and ultimately reintegrate into the broader community. In addition, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) employed by the Trust is available to respond on-site to mental health crises, provide aftercare, and coordinate follow-up services with the on-site services team and community mental health providers including residents' SFPRs.

The Trust has longstanding cooperative partnerships with the major mental health providers in the Skid Row neighborhood and surrounding area including, for

example, the DMH Downtown Clinic, Lamp Community, JWCH, Enki Mental Health, and area Veteran's Administrations. Lamp, a community-based mental health provider, and DMH's directly operated downtown clinic, work with many Skid Row residents. We expect that many New Genesis residents will elect to participate in some Lamp services. Lamp is located at 527 Crocker Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013 – less than a mile from the New Genesis. We also anticipate that many residents will participate in DMH services located at 529 South Maple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013 which is less than ½ a mile from the New Genesis.

We expect the majority of MHSA residents' SFPR to be DMH's directly operated clinic and full service partnership program in Skid Row. For the New Genesis Apartments, DMH and the Trust will enter into a services agreement covering services for a minimum of 18 MHSA eligible residents. To facilitate access and communication a Downtown Mental Health staff person will be designated as the Trust's Housing Liaison. RSCs will collaborate closely with the MHSA residents' SFPR to ensure resident receive the mental health and other supportive services they need.

The DMH directly operated Downtown Mental Health Clinic (located at 529 South Maple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013) is less than ½ a mile from the New Genesis. The Skid Row Full Service Partnership program office (located at 619 East Fifth Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013) is within ¾ of a mile.

➤ *Substance abuse services*

The New Genesis, as all other Trust projects, is a housing first program. To best serve the needs of every resident, the Trust uses a harm reduction approach when working with active users. This practice modality recognizes drug and alcohol use as a personal choice for which the resident is responsible and focuses on identifying the residents' immediate goals for reducing the harmful consequences of their substance use. For many residents, abstinence is the goal toward which the intervening steps are directed.

A variety of off-site substance abuse treatment programs ranging from detoxification, residential treatment, and outpatient programs are available locally. Lamp Community, Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles, the Weingart Center Association, JWCH, and Volunteers of America are among the substance abuse treatment providers in the immediate neighborhood. All of these organizations are within one mile of the New Genesis Apartments. The Trust also has relationships with providers outside of Skid Row including Tarzana Treatment Center and Behavioral Health Services (both of which operate medical detoxification, in-patient, and out-patient programs). In October 2009, the Trust in partnership with Behavioral Health Services received a 5 year grant from SAMHSA to provide recovery services in permanent supportive housing. New Genesis residents will also have the opportunity to benefit from this innovative recovery in housing program.

➤ *Educational, occupational, employment and volunteer services*

Helping residents cultivate interests and engage in meaningful daily activities is an important part of the New Genesis program. Residents are encouraged to participate

in and organize groups and activities that allow them to revisit old interests, discover new ones, explore their talents, and develop or enhance their social and work-related skills.

RSCs will assist residents interested in volunteering find positions both on- and off-site for which they are qualified. Many local social services use volunteers on a regular basis. Alternatively, RSCs will help residents locate opportunities where they may build the skills they need to perform the kind of volunteer work they prefer. For residents interested in pursuing paid employment, referrals will be made to public and private programs that offer services ranging from basic adult education and vocational assessments to job search assistance and on-the-job training.

Many education, training, and employment programs are available in the immediate area. Among them are: *Chrysalis*, a community-based employment program, located 1 block south of the New Genesis (516 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013), provides Employment Specialists, job preparation classes, a job search center, employment focused support groups, and on-the-job training. *Los Angeles Trade Tech*, is a community college offering two year college degrees as well as over ninety occupational programs. The main campus is located 3.7 miles from the New Genesis at 400 W Washington Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015. *Abram Friedman Occupational Center* provides short-term vocational training and job placement assistance as well as classes in Citizenship, Adult Literacy, ESL, classes leading to a high school diploma, and GED preparation. The Center, located at 1646 S. Olive St., Los Angeles, CA 90015 is 1.75 miles from the New Genesis Apartments. The main campus of *Goodwill Industries of Southern California* is 4.4 miles from the New Genesis (342 San Fernando Road, Los Angeles, CA 90031). The Goodwill serves individuals with disabilities providing education, skills training, work experience and job placement services. The *Department of Rehabilitation* assists individuals with disabilities obtain and retain employment and maximize their ability to live independently in their communities. The department's office is located at 3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90010 – 3.6 miles from the New Genesis. *Belmont Community Adult School* offers a variety of classes including basic adult education, GED preparation, ESL, introduction to computer use, and a computer repair program. Belmont classes are offered at the Los Angeles Mission (303 East 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013), Midnight Mission (601 South San Pedro, Los Angeles, CA 90014, and Union Rescue Mission (545 South San Pedro, Los Angeles, CA 90013). All locations are within 3/4 of a mile from the New Genesis Apartments.

➤ *Benefits Advocacy*

New Genesis residents will be able to access the services of JWCH's benefits advocacy program as well as the Volunteers of America's benefits assistance program. Residents will be assisted in all aspects of the application process. The primary goal is to increase the number of residents who apply for and receive benefits for which they are eligible, including SSI, Medi-Cal, Social Security, and Medicare.

➤ *Self-help peer support groups*

There are many established self-help peer support groups offered in the Skid Row neighborhood. AA, CA, and NA meetings are held frequently during the day in multiple locations. The Volunteers of America (628 San Julian Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013) and Lamp Community (527 Crocker Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013) are within 3/4 of a mile from the New Genesis. Both organizations provide a variety of self-help peer support groups that are well attended by members of the community. In addition, SHARE! Self-Help & Recovery Exchange operates a DMH sponsored Wellness Center in downtown Los Angeles. SHARE! Downtown currently offers over 27 self-help support groups a week. The center, located less than 1/2 mile from the New Genesis Apartments at 425 S. Broadway Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

#### Access to and availability of services

Regular on-site services will be offered during normal business hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Throughout the year, events will also be held on weekend days. After hours, trained property management staff are available to handle emergencies. While RSCs have regularly scheduled meetings with residents, their open door policy guarantees ready access to support for whatever issues may arise and require immediate attention. In addition, groups, workshops, and activities are offered frequently throughout the week. New Genesis residents not only have access to these services, but they are also welcome to join groups at any of the other buildings in the Trust's portfolio – such as the Pershing Hotel (1 block from the New Genesis) and the Rainbow and Abbey Apartments (located at 643 and 625 S. San Pedro Street respectively). RSCs will communicate regularly with DMH staff in order to ensure that timely interventions take place when needed and that the residents' service plans are being monitored appropriately. Property management staff will be on-site 24 hours a day.

As noted above, the New Genesis Apartments is convenient to many community-based supportive services. Further, an important part of the Trust's program is to help residents engage in recreation and leisure activities. The New Genesis is less than 3/4 of a mile from two small public parks and a community center. The recently revived downtown arts district as well as numerous cultural institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, Disney Concert Hall and the Public Library are all within walking distance – as is a vibrant, affordable shopping district.

Services and activities outside the neighborhood may easily be accessed using public transportation. The New Genesis project is located within a 1/4 mile of ten MTA local bus routes (33, 83, 92, 333, 16, 18, 28, 53, 316, and 62) and three Metro Rapid routes (720, 728, and 763) that provide services at least every 12 minutes on weekdays. The property is also located within one mile of three subway stations: Civic Center, Pershing Square, and 7th and Metro. The New Genesis is 1 mile from Union Station, providing access to all local and intra-state bus systems, subways, and trains. In addition, Para transit and City Ride services are available for seniors and those with mobility impairments.

Although proximity to services and easy access to transportation is important,

residents often have difficulty negotiating the systems in which these services and programs are embedded. The RSCs will work with residents to ensure that they receive the services they seek, actively advocating on their behalf when necessary. Further, RSCs will assist residents who may need to develop the skills required to carry out various activities of daily living such as shopping and using public transportation. They will also help residents build the confidence needed to explore and enjoy the community in which they live.

#### **D.4.1d Service Delivery Approach and Assessing Need**

##### Service Delivery Approach

The program's primary goals are: 1) to provide a permanent, affordable, independent living opportunity to homeless individuals with serious mental illness and other disabilities, and 2) to foster residential stability, independence, supportive social support systems, and positive life choices through the provision of recovery-oriented integrated services and wellness activities that are client-driven and strength-focused. Ultimately, the program seeks to create an environment where residents with serious mental illness and other disabilities receive the information, treatment, and support they need to maintain their housing and gain a sense of mastery over their lives and illness.

The various elements of the New Genesis program strongly support this process of healing, recovery, and transformation by providing MHSA residents with a supportive social environment, the opportunity to develop positive relationships, participate in meaningful daily activities, develop personally, and receive the professional services they may need to make healthy decisions about their lives, and develop a clear understanding of their mental illness and other disabilities. In addition, the program aims to develop and foster individual resilience by reducing residents' risk factors and helping them develop strong protective coping mechanisms – thereby enhancing their ability to respond successfully to life's challenges and setbacks. Residents receive the support of a service team that provides coordinated services to address primary and mental health needs, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders as well as providing life skills workshops, socialization activities, benefits advocacy, education, employment, legal assistance and other support services in combination with permanent affordable housing.

To this end, the program is comprised of seven components provided on- or off-site: 1) integrated assessment and service/treatment planning, 2) psychiatric care together with group and individual mental health counseling, 3) group and individual substance abuse treatment, 4) primary health care, 5) educational, life skills, and personal development groups, workshops, and activities, 6) volunteer and employment skill development and job search programs, and 7) socialization events. Additional services such as payee services, day treatment programs, detoxification and in-patient substance abuse programs, and education and vocational services will also be provided through referrals to community partners as needed.

RSCs strive to provide a resident-driven, strength-based program. The transtheoretical Stages of Change model coupled with motivational interviewing techniques has proven to be an effective means of helping individuals work toward recovery in many areas. This orientation, together with harm reduction, is the primary practice modality used by Trust staff. By effectively drawing on these models of practice and interaction, the RSCs are truly able to meet the residents where they are, using the appropriate dialogue. It is also critical for staff to be knowledgeable about the role age and cultural differences play in shaping their residents' and their own attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, during both case conferences and in-service training sessions, issues of cultural competency are addressed. The Trust is committed to providing culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate services by hiring staff members who represent the cultural diversity of our resident population and understand how to modify services so that they are developmentally appropriate. Efforts will be made to provide services in the resident's preferred language. At least one of the on-site staff members will be bilingual. Further, we recognize that racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, and low income individuals often face serious barriers when attempting to access health and human services. Staff will advocate on behalf of residents as needed. Celebrating diversity is an integral part of community-building as well. For example, both secular and religious holidays offer ideal opportunities to acquaint residents with a wide range of cultures different from their own.

### Assessing Need

Each MHSA resident will work with the MHSA RSC. The RSC will be the resident's primary service coordinator within the New Genesis services team as well as the program liaison with off-site service providers. RSCs will conduct an initial assessment with the MHSA tenant to determine the range of services each new resident needs. On the basis of this assessment, together the RSC and the resident will begin to develop a service plan addressing the resident's goals. In order to maximize engagement and ensure the resident's priorities remain central, the assessment and service planning processes will be flexible and tenant-centered. Ideally, the initial assessment and accompanying plan will be completed within thirty days of program entry. Although service staff will be engaged in an on-going assessment process with the resident, adjusting the service plan accordingly, each resident's plan will officially be reviewed every six months. As part of the assessment process, after obtaining appropriate authorization, the RSC in collaboration with the resident, will coordinate contact with off-site service providers from whom the resident receives services – including the residents' SFPRs. Further, the RSC will work to ensure that residents are connected to organizations in the community that provide services and self-help groups not available internally. Collectively, the on-site services team will be familiar with a wide range of available community resources.

Assessment is an on-going process requiring frequent contact and meaningful communication between RSCs and residents. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. After the initial assessments and service plans are completed, RSCs will meet individually with each resident biweekly or more often if necessary. The RSC team orientation to service provision, open door policy, and participation in facilitating groups

and events also ensures that residents have ready access to support and information when needed. The RSC will also be in frequent contact with other community providers who are assisting residents off-site. Meetings with outside service providers will be held as needed. Staff will also convene a monthly case conference specifically with the SFPRs working with New Genesis residents. A weekly Supportive Housing meeting will bring together resident service and property management staff. In these meetings, staff will discuss resident progress, focusing on those who are experiencing challenges. The goal is to identify problems early and intervene quickly so that the resident's housing is not jeopardized. In all interactions, staff is in compliance with HIPPA to ensure resident privacy is protected.

#### **D.4.2            SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE**

##### **D.4.2a           Promoting wellness, recovery and resiliency Peer support self-help groups**

The New Genesis program operates on the premise that integrated supportive services combined with permanent affordable housing is the most effective way of reducing homelessness, promoting wellness, building resilience, and supporting recovery among people who are homeless and living with disabilities including mental illness, substance abuse, and other chronic illnesses.

The supportive housing program at the New Genesis combines on- and off-site services that include but are not limited to intensive case management and services coordination, benefits advocacy, primary and specialty medical care, mental health and substance abuse services, as well as educational, occupational, volunteer, and employment services. (Details about these aspects of the program are provided in Section D.4.1c above. Section D.4.1d above sets forth the Trust's approach to service delivery.)

The professional services mentioned above are often critical to our residents' ability to maintain housing, better manage the symptoms of their illnesses, and become more independent and self-sufficient. In addition to ensuring residents receive the services they need and desire, facilitating the development of a positive supportive community at the New Genesis Apartments is one of the RSCs primary mandates. Living in a healthy, supportive community leads to feelings of safety and security among residents – important emotional prerequisites for attaining wellness, recovery, and resilience. Further, helping to build a healthy community within their building provides residents with meaningful activities, increases their confidence and self-esteem, broadens their social support network, refines their interpersonal skills, and significantly enhances quality of life.

The New Genesis program will include a wide range of activities, groups, and training opportunities organized and implemented by residents and staff. These activities fall into five overlapping categories: 1) Community building, social networking, and social skills development (eg., holiday celebrations, beach trips, cultural excursions, domino, chess, and card tournaments, dance and birthday parties); 2) Interest-based

activities, workshops, and groups (eg., gardening, cooking, conversational Spanish, writing, art and architecture, bicycle repair, book clubs). 3) Life skills enhancement (meal planning, shopping, and meal preparation, time management basics, housekeeping, techniques for communicating clearly, money management fundamentals); 4) Educational and therapeutic sessions (eg., health promotion, nutrition, weight management, anger management, stages of change, understanding addiction, understanding schizophrenia, depression, etc., relaxation techniques); 5) Building skills for employment and volunteer opportunities (how to become a valued volunteer or employee, business writing and mathematics, finding meaningful work, effective resume writing, filling out employment applications, answering hard interview questions).

The schedule of activities, workshops, and groups will change throughout the year to best meet the residents' needs and interests. Community events and celebrations will largely be planned and carried out by residents with staff assistance as needed. Staff will be selected to oversee and/or implement activities based on their interests and expertise. For example, a healthcare professional may present a workshop on understanding and managing diabetes and then oversee an on-going peer support group for diabetic residents or a case manager may co-facilitate a Stages of Change group with a resident focusing on substance abuse for residents in the contemplation stage. The development of resident self-help/mutual support groups will be strongly encouraged and supported. Staff will assist as needed. Successful resident run or co-facilitated groups operate throughout the Trust's buildings. In addition, SHARE! Self-Help & Recovery Exchange's downtown Los Angeles center is located within ½ a mile from the New Genesis Apartments at 425 S. Broadway Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013. SHARE! currently offers over 27 self-help support groups a week.

Residents will be actively engaged in determining what activities, workshops, and groups are offered and strongly encouraged to participate in their implementation. The aim is to develop a healthy supportive community within the building, foster a sense of ownership, and develop leadership among residents. By participating in the design and delivery of the services, residents are able to work together, develop self-confidence, and draw on their own strengths and capacities. By providing multiple options, residents are given choices and are able to develop an individualized set of activities for themselves.

#### **D.4.2b Community services: Achieving independence**

The New Genesis services staff strive to help residents stabilize in housing and develop or resurrect the life skills they need to become as independent in housing as possible. These basic skills form the foundation for future growth and skill refinement or acquisition. In addition, RSCs work closely with residents to set clear, achievable goals and develop realistic plans for attaining them. This process provides residents with a clearer understanding of the steps they need to take, the skills they need to acquire or enhance, the length of time each step may take, as well as a tangible means of tracking progress.

Ensuring that residents access the benefits for which they are eligible, maintaining those benefits, and developing the skills to manage their income appropriately are important to residents' independence. As mentioned in Section D.4.1c, benefits advocacy services will be available to New Genesis residents. In addition, money management and budgeting are part of the RSCs' routine work with residents. Those who are in need of more intensive benefits and money management services will be referred to benefits programs at the VOA or Mental Health Advocacy Services or to Lamp Community's money management program.

The New Genesis is within easy walking distance of a wide variety of public and community-based service providers. In addition to health, mental health, and substance abuse services, staff will facilitate resident access to a range of employment, job training, and education services that will support increased independence. The following employment and education programs are within 1.2 miles from the New Genesis:

- *Chrysalis* provides Employment Specialists, job preparation classes, a job search center, employment focused support groups, and on-the-job training. (516 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013)
- *Belmont Community Adult School* offers a variety of classes including basic adult education, GED preparation, ESL, introduction to computer use, and a computer repair program. Belmont classes are offered at the Los Angeles Mission (303 East 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013), Midnight Mission (601 South San Pedro, Los Angeles, CA 90014, and Union Rescue Mission (545 South San Pedro, Los Angeles, CA 90013).
- *Downtown Work Source Center* provides employment specialists, local job listings, training resources, as well as the equipment and tools needed to conduct a job search (315 W. 9<sup>th</sup> street, Los Angeles, CA 90014).
- *Downtown Women's Center* offered a series of computer literacy and computer classes for women. (325 South Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013)
- *Los Angeles Public Library* provides one-on-one tutoring in ESL, math, reading, and science. (630 W. 5th Street Los Angeles, CA 90071).

The following programs are within 2-4 miles of the New Genesis:

- *Los Angeles Trade Tech* offers two year community college degrees as well as over 90 occupational programs. (400 W Washington Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015)
- *Abram Friedman Occupational Center* provides short-term vocational training and job placement assistance as well as classes in Citizenship, Adult Literacy, ESL, and classes leading to a high school diploma and GED preparation. (1646 S. Olive St., Los Angeles, CA 90015)
- *Department of Rehabilitation* assists individuals with disabilities obtain and retain employment and maximize their ability to live independently in their communities. (3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90010)

The New Genesis Apartments is within easy access to public transportation including buses, subway lines, and trains. Para transit and City Ride services are also available if needed. (For additional information about access to transit, see Sec. D.4.1c)

### **D.4.3 HOUSING STABILITY**

As noted above, the New Genesis program operates on the premise that integrated supportive services combined with permanent affordable housing is the most effective way of reducing homelessness, promoting wellness, building resilience, and supporting recovery among people who are homeless and living with disabilities including mental illness, substance abuse, and other chronic illnesses. The New Genesis program takes into account each resident's unique constellation of needs and emphasizes: 1) placement in permanent housing; 2) reasonable tenant to staff ratios; 3) providing services on-site and in the community, (4) provision of all services by a well-trained service team, 5) the importance of voluntary participation with no pre-determined sequence or set of services, and 6) honoring the residents' involvement in service planning, delivery, and community building. Services include, but are not limited to case management and services coordination, mental health, substance abuse, primary medical care, education and employment services, psycho educational, life skills, and peer support groups, and community-building activities.

Staff employ a number of strategies to promote housing stability and retention among residents. One very general, and perhaps self-evident strategy, is nevertheless extremely important. Residents that value their housing are more likely to want to stay housed and do what is needed to stabilize in and maintain their housing. The Trust strives to provide beautiful, safe, well maintained buildings. RSCs strive to create a community within the building that is healthy, supportive, and fun. In other words, they work to create a place residents want to live – and, when necessary, work hard to keep.

Upon entering housing, MHSA residents will be assigned an RSC. The MHSA RSC will work with eighteen MHSA residents. The MHSA RSC will work as part of the resident services team to best serve the needs of the entire New Genesis community. Residents will be encouraged to participate – voluntarily and at their own pace – in a wide range of supportive services provided both on-site and in the community.

RSCs begin to assess threats to residents' housing stability (both initially and over time) during their first formal and informal encounters. During their initial assessments, RSCs work to uncover current challenges that may make stabilizing in housing difficult. They also seek to understand the main sources of past housing instability and loss. Together, using this information, the residents and the RSCs set a residential stability goal and a plan to achieve the goal. RSCs and residents review goals and action plans frequently, revising the action steps as needed. Clearly, access to the services and activities identified in the action plan is critical to resident success.

Frequent formal and informal encounters with residents allow RSCs to monitor

behavior under a variety of conditions. In addition, as discussed in more detail in Section D.4.5 below, the RSCs work collaboratively with the on-site property management staff (PMC) to ensure the well-being of the residents. For example, PMC and Trust services staff check-in with one another daily. In this way, staff can very quickly identify “red flags” and address them. Further, during weekly supportive housing meetings, PMC staff and RSCs come together specifically to discuss building operations and resident-related issues. One important goal of this meeting is to discuss residents who are experiencing challenges in order to identify problems as early as possible, intervene quickly, and ensure that a coordinated plan of action is in place so that the resident’s housing is not jeopardized. PMC and resident services staff work to develop a housing retention action plan tailored to the residents’ challenges and engage them in taking the necessary corrective actions. Throughout this process, the resident is actively engaged. RSCs will alert MHSA residents’ SFPRs as soon as challenges are recognized, inviting them to participate in the action plan. Ultimately, however, residents whose housing is threatened must choose to alter their problematic behavior.

#### **D.4.4      ENGAGING TENANTS**

Over the past twenty years, the Trust has successfully implemented a tenant-focused housing application and engagement process. The Trust believes engagement is a process, not an event. Engagement occurs during every tenant contact – before entering housing, during the application process, and after the lease is signed. It is difficult for most people to trust others about whom they know very little. Given their life circumstances this is often especially true for individuals who have been homeless and are disabled. Staff throughout the organization understand that they must work respectfully and consciously to develop a positive, trusting relationship with prospective tenants and current residents alike.

The trust building process is comprised of both formal and informal engagement opportunities. Formal engagement begins during the housing application process when staff assist prospective tenants with the required paperwork. Successfully completing a housing application provides an opportunity for staff to provide concrete support. Further, during the housing interview, prospective tenants have an opportunity to meet both Resident Services and PMC staff. These interviews are designed to ensure that applicants understand the responsibilities associated with being a lease holder, are informed of the building rules, and have a clear grasp of the services and supports available to them. Importantly, prospective residents have an opportunity to ask questions about the Trust and the residential services program. On the basis of this information, prospective residents are better able make a reasoned decision about their future home. As a housing first provider, these interviews are not intended to screen people out; rather, during this initial interview staff are able to gather information that may help them provide a smooth transition from the streets or shelter into permanent housing.

Once residents move into housing, their assigned RSC also begins formal engagement activities – providing building orientations, setting up meetings, reviewing

needs, and so on. However, in addition to these formal opportunities, there are many important informal opportunities for the engagement process to be enriched. Chatting with tenants in the lobby or courtyard, watching a favorite TV program together, or playing a game of dominoes all provide low stress opportunities to meet and develop rapport with residents. In these situations, residents are free to engage to the extent that they are comfortable. The keys to both formal and informal engagement strategies are consistency, respecting individual choice, and constructing reasonable, mutually agreed upon expectations.

Further, one of the guiding principles of social work practice is to “meet individuals where they are.” To do this effectively, staff use the Stages of Change model together with motivational interviewing techniques to work with residents. This practice modality has proven very successful in developing the rapport necessary for honest engagement around many issues including mental illness and substance abuse. The guiding principle of this highly successful model is that for most people, behavior changes occur gradually. Often, individuals experiencing significant challenges are unable to acknowledge the problem for a variety of reasons. For individuals at this stage – pre-contemplation – the key to movement is not to demand change, but rather to find ways of helping the resident entertain the possibility that there is a problem. At the pre-contemplation stage, perhaps more than any other, the staff must rely on the strength of the alliance they began to build the first day the resident moved in. The goal of the work done during the pre-contemplation stage is directed toward helping the resident acknowledge that there is a problem and begin considering a change (contemplation). Once change is contemplated, residents move toward deciding and preparing to make a change (preparation/action). Genuine, determined action is then taken and, over time, various strategies are employed to maintain the new behavior (maintenance). This highly individualized, resident-centered and driven process has proven effective in helping residents draw on their strengths to successfully achieve goals they have set.

Moreover, a wide variety of on-site groups and activities are offered throughout the year with the goal of sparking the interest and involvement of all New Genesis residents (please see Section D.4.2a above for details). Community events and celebrations will largely be planned and carried out by residents with staff assistance as needed. The development of resident self-help/mutual support groups will be strongly encouraged and supported. By actively involving residents in the planning and implementation of program offerings, residents take ownership of the program, develop leadership skills, and serve as ambassadors to new residents – encouraging and supporting their participation. As residents stabilize in housing and participate in community activities in the building, they begin to develop the confidence and skills needed to participate actively and meaningfully in the larger community.

#### Frequency of contact

RSCs will be available during normal business hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Events are also held on weekend days throughout the year. While RSCs meet biweekly with residents one-on-one, their open door policy guarantees ready access to support when needed. In addition, RSCs facilitate groups,

workshops, and activities throughout the week. RSCs will also work closely with providers in the community to ensure residents are receiving services as needed. Property management staff are on-site 24 hours a day, providing a secure environment for residents, guaranteeing that crisis services are always available.

#### **D.4.5            COMMUNICATION**

##### **Service provider – Property management communications**

The Trust has well developed protocols in place to ensure prompt communication between residential services and property management staff. To ensure resident privacy, all staff receive HIPPA compliance training. Information is shared only after obtaining resident consent. The SRHT Property Management Company (PMC) will provide property management services to the New Genesis project. A nonprofit affiliate of the Trust, the PMC was formed in 1995 specifically to provide property management services in a sensitive manner. The PMC currently manages the Trust's entire portfolio of 21 residential properties on Skid Row comprising over 1,400 units (the majority of which are set aside for residents with disabilities). Consequently, the PMC has extensive experience serving individuals who have been homeless and live with disabilities – many of whom have a mental illness, HIV/AIDS, substance use issues, or more than one of these conditions. The PMC employs approximately one hundred professionals, including on-site staff (housing supervisors, building managers, and desk clerks) as well as maintenance and janitorial crews.

The Trust and PMC staffing plans greatly facilitate communication between PMC and services staff while maintaining a clear separation of responsibilities and duties. The PMC Director oversees all PMC operations and supervises the Supportive Housing Director who manages all residential/social service program operations. The Supportive Housing Director oversees the Field Supervisors who, in turn, supervise all on-site PMC staff as well as the RSCs. The Trust has established policies and procedures that ensure access to the building manager or the field supervisor during routine business hours (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) and in case of emergencies. All property management supervisors can be reached by cell phone 24 hours a day. Property management supervisors also have 24 hour access to the PMC Director and the Supportive Housing Director.

PMC staff and residential services staff have very clearly specified roles and responsibilities. Within these roles, they work as a team to provide the highest quality services for tenants as possible. The Trust's programs at the St. George Hotel, Rainbow Apartments and Abbey Apartments are three of a very few successful models in Los Angeles County of providing comprehensive multi-disciplinary services in supportive housing. PMC staff have been active and important participants in those programs, contributing significantly to program success. (For a brief description of these multi-agency collaboratives, please see Section D.4.1b.) While these sites represent the most complex service configurations in the Trust's portfolio, each of the Trust's buildings with supportive services operates from the same basic premise – successful supportive

housing requires the close collaboration of both service and property management staff.

#### Admission, eviction, eviction appeals

The PMC has policies and procedures covering admission, eviction, and eviction appeals consistent with requirements established by fair housing laws and project funding sources. Detailed descriptions of these policies and procedures are provided in Section D.3 above. As noted in Section D.3, for MHSA eligible prospective residents, the Trust will follow DMH's MHSA Housing Program Tenant Referral and Certification Process. In addition, the DMH Downtown Mental Health Clinic will continually assess their tenants' need for housing, completing the certification process when appropriate. In this way, when the New Genesis is ready to occupy, this aspect of prospective residents' application will already be completed, reducing the complexity of the process for them. DMH clients applying for housing at the New Genesis who are not already MHSA housing certified will immediately be given the necessary paperwork and referred for certification completion.

In order to secure capital funding for its projects, the detailed policies and procedures described earlier have been reviewed and approved specifically for homeless individuals with mental illness by the County of Los Angeles Community Development Commission, Los Angeles Housing Department, California Department of Housing and Community Development, and the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee. In no event shall a tenancy be confirmed unless the applicant meets all occupancy and other eligibility requirements as set for under the Section 8 Project-based Voucher Program and other applicable loan and regulatory requirements, consistent with state and federal fair housing laws. By the same token, in no event shall a tenancy be terminated without ample advance notice, an opportunity to rectify the matter in question, and a court hearing. It should be noted that all funding sources and the Shelter Plus Care Program require just cause evictions. However, it is the goal of the PMC to prevent eviction or loss of housing, to evict a tenant only in the most extreme circumstances, and only when other measures to resolve the problem have been exhausted.

Explained absences (e.g., hospitalization, other in-patient treatment, family crisis, etc.) from the unit can be managed for up to 90 days without penalty. Often crises are due to serious behavioral health issues. In these cases, the RSCs will attempt to secure housing and treatment with organizations with which the Trust has a close working relationship such as LAMP Community's Safe Haven or detoxification through Behavioral Health Services or Tarzana Treatment Center.

#### Tenant crises and frequency of contact

In our experience, the most efficacious measure that can be taken to ensure continued housing stability (especially during a crisis) is good case management. On-site PMC and Trust services staff check-in with one another daily. In this way, staff can very quickly identify "red flags" and address them before escalation occurs. There are built-in mechanisms related to property management that also help identify issues that

may need attention. For example, upon entry residents agree that staff may enter their units monthly for pest control and to inspect units in preparation for the Los Angeles Housing Department's annual Systematic Code Inspection. PMC staff pay careful attention to resident responses to these routine scheduled events as well as to the condition of the residents' units because both may be early warning signs of trouble.

After hours, the Property Manager is responsible for handling crises and coordinating communications with program staff. Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure that all incidents and emergencies are documented and responded to appropriately.

Further, during weekly supportive housing meetings, PMC staff and RSCs come together specifically to discuss building operations and resident-related issues. In these meetings staff discuss resident progress, focusing on those who are experiencing challenges. The goal is to identify problems early and intervene quickly so that the resident's housing is not jeopardized. This means that the RSCs (and therefore the entire service team) are aware of the crisis, have developed a plan to effectively address the situation in a tenant-centered way, and follow through appropriately. In order to ensure that residents are receiving the support and services they need, the MHSA RSC will contact MHSA residents' SFPRs as soon as challenges are recognized.

#### RSC – Community service provider communications

The RSC will be in frequent contact with other community providers who are assisting residents off-site. Meetings with outside service providers will be held as needed. Staff will also convene bimonthly case conference specifically with the SFPRs working with New Genesis residents to discuss resident progress. Trust administrative staff routinely communicate informally with community partners about current and future collaborations. Formal quarterly meetings will be held with administrators from the primary service providers for the New Genesis Apartments including DMH. Trust management staff will be available to DMH management as needed.