



December 14, 2015

## SNAPS In Focus: Guest Blog by Ed Blackburn, Executive Director of Central City Concern



Above: Leonard Brightmon in front of his new home

After two decades of drug use and instability, Leonard took charge of his life and entered Central City Concern (CCC) Hooper Detox program in 2009. Upon completion, he wanted to employ every available tool to sustain his recovery and he entered Central City Concern’s transitional Recovery Housing. He says, “Central City Concern gave me a reason to stay when I was looking for a reason to run.” Leonard’s experiences in Recovery Housing consistently propelled him to keep striving for more successes in every aspect of his life. With CCC staff and peers behind him each step of the way, Leonard not only maintained his recovery, but he also added new skills, gained employed (and was promoted multiple times), restored a positive parenting relationship with his daughter and became a homeowner – the kind of neighbor any of us would be pleased to have.

Leonard made a choice to engage with Recovery Housing and when it comes to ending homelessness, CCC has found that consumer choice is of paramount importance in achieving successful outcomes. What might work for one person may not work for another. Today’s [HUD Brief on Recovery Housing](#) brings greater focus to a model that works for those who are self initiating recovery from substance use disorders. HUD’s recognition of Recovery Housing is a major step in helping CoC’s adopt this model of housing for those who want and need it.

Central City Concern owns/manages more than 1,700 units of affordable housing and embraces all models, from Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to Recovery Housing. At CCC in Portland, Oregon, Recovery Housing is a housing choice that individuals may make. It is operated by using low barrier congregate housing with a strong commitment to an intentional peer supported community.

Individuals come to this housing from the streets, the detox center or residential treatment because they have exhausted all other options and they want to commit to a recovery lifestyle in order to end their homelessness for good. Many of those served in this housing have had 10 or more prior housing opportunities which ended with evictions, often as a result of disruptive behaviors exhibited while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

CCC provides opportunities to those choosing to address their substance use disorders through both Transitional and Permanent Recovery Housing. In addition to CoC funding, CCC leverages a variety of other funding streams for services provided to those receiving Recovery Housing including HRSA and Medicaid funded integrated healthcare, City and USDA funded Supported Employment, County funded benefits and entitlement counseling, and city and federally funded short term rental assistance.

Recipients of Transitional Recovery Housing rely on the support of their Recovery Peer Mentors to help them navigate through services and secure permanent housing and economic self-sufficiency as they reintegrate into the community. We have found that providing options and support results in lasting stability. Across two programs measured, 89% of individuals who had graduated from treatment and moved into permanent housing were still in that housing 12 months later.



The Policy Brief details recommendations for successful implementation of Recovery Housing and CCC is shaping a formal way to assist organizations with this kind of programming. Please email Policy Director, Rachel Post ([Rachel.post@ccconcern.org](mailto:Rachel.post@ccconcern.org)) for more information.

Ed Blackburn  
Executive Director, Central City Concern

