

Oxford Houses Questions and Answers

What is an Oxford House?

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

Who manages an Oxford House?

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

How long can anyone live in an Oxford House?

A recovering individual can live in an Oxford House for as long as he or she does not drink alcohol, does not use drugs, and pays an equal share of the house expenses. The average stay is a little over a year, but many residents stay three, four, or more years. There is no pressure on anyone in good standing to leave.

Why is Oxford House self-run?

Oxford Houses are self-run because (1) this permits individuals in recovery to learn responsibility, and (2) the cost associated with self-run housing permits extensive replication of houses. Each House is fully responsible for its own expenses and debts which will not and cannot be assumed by the National Organization of Oxford Houses.

How can one get into an Oxford House?

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

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

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

Is there any financial aid available to start a new Oxford House?

Yes, each state has in place a revolving loan fund that can make loans to cover the first month's rent and security deposit (up to \$4000) to rent a house in a good neighborhood. The loan must be repaid by the group within two years in 24 equal installments.

Can the new house become affiliated with Oxford House?

Yes, by simply writing or calling Oxford House to ask for a Charter application. Once that application is completed and received by Oxford House, Inc., a "Conditional Charter" will be granted to the house at no cost. A Permanent Charter must be earned by the House.

Can an Oxford House be started without a loan from the state?

Yes, the prospective residents of the House can find a suitable house, rent it, put up the security deposit and pay the first month's rent themselves. Oxford House, Inc. will consider favorably a Charter application whether or not a loan is received from the State.

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

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

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

Experience of Oxford House has shown that from 8 to 15 members works very well. A house with fewer than six individuals is difficult to maintain because of the small size of the group and the fact that any vacancy causes a greater disruption of the financial welfare of the house. A house must have six or more residents in order to be recognized or chartered by Oxford House.

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

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

What is Oxford House Inc.?

Oxford House Inc., is a non-profit, tax exempt, publicly supported corporation which acts as an umbrella organization for the national network of Oxford Houses. It provides quality control by organizing regional Houses into Chapters and by relying heavily upon the national network of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups. While Oxford House is not affiliated with AA or NA, its members realize that recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction can only be assured by the changing of their lifestyle through full participation in AA and NA. In most communities, the members of those organizations help Oxford Houses get started and report any charter compliance problems with respect to a particular house. As soon as Oxford House Inc., hears of such problems, it takes corrective action because the good name of Oxford House is an important factor in the recovery of thousands of individuals.