

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

YWCA Supportive Housing Initiative Talking Points / FAQ's



Why did you pick this location for the facility?

- After exploring 10-15 location ideas in 2022, and seeking County and City input, the gravel lot across from Law Center (formerly a gas station) is the location we collaboratively determined will best serve the community needs. The selection of this location was done in a very meaningful manner, after much consideration, and done so with a committee of individuals. Access to transportation, jobs, medical facilities, public housing, all within walking distance. The proximity to the Law Center and new Community Resource Center was also a large factor in selection. The County jail is already located there.
- After re-zoning was not approved by the Clinton City Council, we reached out to IFA to ask if we could move the location. IFA gave us until 11/30/23 to find new site in the same census tract that met all the HUD NHTF guidelines.
- We asked City leaders to propose alternate sites and DeWitt Park was selected to move forward to set a Public Hearing on.
- We've designed the facility around the surrounding properties. Nearly two-thirds of the park space will be maintained and enhanced, with new trees planted to replace those removed and park benches added.

Won't this bring more crime to the area?

We are seeking to "house" people, therefore ending their homelessness. Supportive Housing is an evidence-based approach to end homelessness that reduces crime. We know having people housed versus on the streets will reduce crime. We plan for the facility to be a part of a blended crime-free housing program and work to reduce crime in the area, including exterior lighting and cameras. Case managers have offices on site which will provide additional oversight at the facility.

Supportive Housing Improves Health, Reduces Crime, and Increases Employment

A recently released independent study by Elinor Cohen at UCLA finds that **targeted housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness reduces crime, increases employment, and improves health.**

The study finds that participation in housing programs not only reduces the probability of returning to the homeless support system but also (within 18 months):

Improves Health

- Lowers the number of emergency department visits by 80%.

Reduces Crime

- Reduces the number of jail days by 130%.
- Reduces the probability of committing a crime by 80%.

Increases Employment

- Increases the probability of reporting employment by 24%.

<https://nlihc.org/resource/new-study-finds-providing-people-experiencing-homelessness-housing-has-positive-impacts>

Will there be an opportunity for people to get their GED or on-the-job training?

- Yes, absolutely! We already do this with our clients.

What about transportation?

- YWCA Clinton provides transportation assistance through several options based on client need. This location provides easy access to bus lines which also sets clients up for success and options. We partner with MTA, Riverbend Transit, and Paratransit to address the majority of transportation needs.

Will there be drug testing?

- Drugs and drug paraphernalia will NOT be permitted in the facility or on any YWCA-owned property and eviction will occur if found. However, we may not “test for drugs”. We are not a treatment facility; we are a housing opportunity. We will make referrals for treatment and support clients in their recovery.

Sounds like a handout, what makes this different?

- Case management is the critical component in all of our services. We work on financial management with clients, help with assistance to services, address mental health and substance misuse issues, nurturing parenting. We deliver trauma-informed, client-centered services that are strength-based. One stable person in someone’s life can make a world of difference to those living in trauma. A roof over their heads and some stability in their lives is the key to affecting change.

What do you mean by High Utilizer / Low Barrier / Permanent Supportive Housing

- Permanent Supportive Housing is an intervention that combines affordable housing (tenants have the legal right to remain in the unit as long as they qualify, as defined by the terms of a renewable lease agreement and pay no more than 30% of income for housing) with voluntary support services designed to help tenants stay housed and address barriers while building the necessary skills to live as independently as possible. PSH is an **evidence-based housing intervention** that significantly reduces returns to jail and homelessness, reliance on emergency health services, and improves overall quality of life.
- As our community brings State and Federal funding awards to our City/County, we agree to follow State and Federal funding guidelines. YWCA Clinton follows all Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) and HUD guidelines.

Will there be places for families?

- Yes, based on unit availability and family size. Ideally, we will place families in the community versus on site, which will be dependent on needs and resources available.

How will men, women and those with children be separated?

- For Supportive Housing, each person/family would have access to their own unit/apartment, the same as any apartment complex.

Can we adopt different programs from other housing providers?

- We have already been doing this for many years, this project has been in discussion for over eight years. We are always involved in best practices, attending trainings, serving on committees, speaking with colleagues.

What is the long-term planning for finances? How will you pay for this?

- Rental Income. The 24 units of Supportive Housing will be funded by program dollars and rental income.
- Debt-free project. Our experienced developer, Hatch Development has assured us this will be a debt-free project.
- Supplemental funding. We will house diversified services under one roof, with a diverse funding stream, as is best practice for all non-profits and businesses.
- Operating Expenses, Operational Reserves, Building Reserves and an 8-10% vacancy rate are built into the NHTF award.
- Operational Reserves. The National Housing Trust Fund application requires a budget including operational reserves and building reserves.
- An anonymous donor has pledged an additional \$500,000 for an Operational Reserve account to offset any years of hardship.
- Long-term funding is fluid. As with all businesses and even cities, finances are fluid.
- Iowa Finance Authority has never funded an unsuccessful project and has stated they are partners with us in this project.
- The YWCA has a history of successful grant writing, and supportive housing is the evidence-based best practice to help address homelessness.