



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is permanent supportive housing?

Permanent supportive housing is long-term, affordable rental housing linked to services to help formerly homeless people remain in their homes and achieve self-sufficiency. While temporary shelters and transitional housing can help people who are homeless manage short-term emergencies and bridge waiting periods for housing, these options are still a step or two away from living on the streets. A stable home can lift homeless individuals and families out of crisis.¹

2. How do supportive services, specifically, assist in ending homelessness?

Supportive services tailored toward a person's needs are an important component of housing-based solutions to homelessness. These services are designed to help people stabilize their lives, achieve self-sufficiency, and remain in their homes. Services may include:

- Help maintaining a lease, being a successful tenant, and other life skills training;
- Case management and connections to mainstream services such as health care, mental health care, and rehabilitation;
- Assistance with post-secondary education, job training, and employment counseling.²

¹ (Housing-Based Solutions Can End Homelessness, 2020)

² (Housing-Based Solutions Can End Homelessness, 2020)

3. Why does permanent supportive housing work to end homelessness?

Research indicates that people experiencing homelessness need a stable living environment before they can benefit fully from support services and begin to achieve self-sufficiency. According to research by Corporation for Supportive Housing, it costs about the same to house someone in stable, supportive housing as it does to leave that person homeless and reliant upon high-cost crisis care and emergency housing. And housing results in better outcomes for both the person experiencing homelessness and the public systems that must otherwise respond to that person's emergency needs.³

4. How can I give to the Sister Yvonne Gellise Fund?

Gifts can be made as:

1. **One time contributions:** Gifts can be made by credit card or check. To make your gift online, please use the secure AAACF website found here: [Link](#)

Checks can be made out to the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, with "Sister Yvonne Gellise Fund" indicated in the memo section, and mailed to:

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
301 N. Main Street, Suite 300
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

2. **Pledge contributions:** Gifts can be made over time. The AAACF will schedule reminders for gift amounts to be made as designated by the donor. Pledge forms can be found here: [Link](#)
3. **Planned gifts:** Planned gifts establish a legacy and long-term connection to the mission. Planned gift options include:
 - a. Bequests
 - b. Gifts of stock, appreciated assets, property
 - c. Life insurance beneficiary designation
 - d. Charitable gift annuities, providing fixed payments to you or others you name for life in exchange for your gift of cash or securities.

To learn more about which option is right for you, please visit the easy-to-use planned giving information on the [AAACF website](#).

³ (Housing-Based Solutions Can End Homelessness, 2020)

5. Why is this fund established as an endowment?

An endowment allows for long-term stable financial support. This endowment will endure hard economic times and remain a source for funding toward service agencies.

Combatting homelessness is a long-term effort and requires the collaborative support from the public sector and private initiatives. There are many Washtenaw County nonprofit agencies that demonstrate measurable success in providing housing and/or supportive services for persons who experience sustained homelessness or who are at risk of experiencing frequently recurring homelessness. However, these agencies – as well as local governmental partners – face the annual challenge of raising philanthropic funds to provide these services within a risky and uncertain funding landscape. The way to ensure permanent progress on combatting homelessness is to create an endowment. Permanent endowment funds grant out a portion of their investment returns every year while preserving the “corpus” and growing the investment over time. As the endowment grows, the intent is to alleviate the need for qualified agencies to raise annual funds. Instead, resources will be freed up to go towards service delivery or to leverage public funding to increase available housing. Endowment ensures that charitable dollars will continue to grow and be available to respond to the needs of our most vulnerable community members.

6. Who is financially managing this endowment and how is it invested?

The **Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation** is the financial investment body for the SYG Fund. The Sister Yvonne Gellise Fund annually distributes grants based on a 16-quarter rolling average as of 9/30 the previous year, while a portion is retained to cover administrative and investment expenses.

7. What is the role of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance?

The WHA is the connecting and managerial force for the SYG Fund. The WHA coordinates the permanent supportive housing process, communicates with the service agencies, and manages the grant distribution towards the need. The mission of the WHA is to end homelessness in Washtenaw County.

The SYG Fund distribution is granted to an agency(ies) that fulfills the charitable purpose of providing permanent supportive housing services to the most vulnerable in our community.

8. Who are the parties involved in the Sister Yvonne Gellise Fund and the effort to end homelessness in Washtenaw County?

Washtenaw Housing Alliance

The WHA is a coalition of 30+ nonprofit and government entities providing services and housing to people who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Focus areas include:

1. Shepherding **Blueprint to End Homelessness** to success
2. Planning and coordinating lead entity for **Coordinated Funding**
3. Promoting **system efficiencies** and **best practices**
4. **Advocacy** and public **education**

Public Sector

The WHA works closely with Continuum of Care, Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development

Service Agencies

- [Avalon Housing](#)
- [Michigan Ability Partners](#)
- [Family Empowerment Program \(Eastern University\)](#)
- [Ozone House](#)

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation

The Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF) is the financial investment body for the SYG Fund. The AAACF is a philanthropic organization with a broad community focus: enriching the quality of life in Washtenaw County. More than 50 years ago, residents established the foundation as a permanent source of community capital in Washtenaw County. Think of us as a savings account for the community, with proceeds from our endowed funds distributed as grants for local nonprofits and scholarships. Through a core team of 17 Trustees, a staff of 12, and 400+ volunteers, AAACF connects people, charitable causes, and permanent capital for community impact.

9. Is there duplication of services and how do I know what to support?

Each service agency is specialized and serves a particular need or particular group of people. They serve people based on whether they are an individual, veteran, family, have disabilities, etc. They are also very collaborative and work together to guide people towards the agency based on their need.

10. Why doesn't more funding come from the government?

Federal funding is currently around \$5 million. However, these funds are directed mainly towards helping to cover the cost of rent. There are additional significant costs and every financial support is significant

11. What is the cost comparison for permanent supportive housing versus alternatives?

Compared to **\$40 per day** for supportive housing with services for a single adult in Washtenaw County, it costs:

- **\$94 per day** to pay for the imprisonment of one person in a Michigan prison;
- **\$129 per day** to pay for the imprisonment of one person in the Washtenaw County Jail;
- **\$66 per day** to pay for the costs of one adult to stay in a temporary shelter;
- One study found an average cost savings on emergency services (i.e. shelters) of \$31,545 per person housed in a Housing First program over the course of two years.

12. What are the outcomes of the SYG Fund so far?

- We have reached our goal of raising \$5 million by 2019.
- This endowment amount has allowed us to grant out \$372,391.35 to date to our partner service agencies.
- In 2020 we distributed \$93,834 to Avalon Housing and Michigan Ability Partners.
- Permanent Supportive Housing has a long-term housing retention rate of up to 98% in one study.
- Total homelessness has declined by about 25% since 2015

Additional resources on solutions that work to end and prevent homelessness

- [National Alliance to End Homelessness San Francisco Homeless Project](#)
- [Solutions that Work to End Homelessness](#)
- [Improving Housing Outcome with Rapid Re-Housing](#)
- [Housing Based Solutions Can End Homelessness](#)
- [Family Homelessness 2.0](#)
- [Shifting the Focus from Criminalization to Housing](#)
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness Housing First Fact Sheet](#)

- [Video: Ending Family Homelessness - From Family Homeless Programs to a Crisis Resolution System](#)
- [Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing](#)
- [Editorial: To End Homelessness, California Must Begin With Housing](#)

Resources on general homelessness information

- [The State of Homelessness in America 2016](#)
- [Funders Together Blog](#)

Resource Used In This FAQ Page

Funders Together to End Homelessness. 2020. *Housing-Based Solutions Can End Homelessness*. [online] Available at: <http://www.funderstogether.org/housing_based_solutions_can_end_homelessness> [Accessed 17 June 2020].