

Supported Living Services

Definition

Supported Living is a service that has proven extremely effective in assisting individuals to live in homes of their own choice in the community, regardless of the severity of their support needs. This service is highly individualized and draws upon a system of supports and adaptations to create a home that meets the support needs of the individuals who live there. Supported Living services have successfully helped many individuals live in their home community and not limiting individuals to more restrictive settings.

The range of supported living services and supports available includes, but is not limited to: assistance in finding, modifying, and maintaining a home; securing a lease or rental agreement; facilitating circles of support to encourage the development of unpaid and natural supports in the community; advocacy and self-advocacy facilitation; development of employment opportunities; social and daily living skills training and support; provision of 24 hour emergency response systems; securing adaptive equipment and supplies; recruiting and training individuals, paid or unpaid, to provide personal care and other assistance; financial management and budgeting support; and facilitating community participation.

Inherent in the Supported Living model is the belief that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to choose where and with whom they live, and to live in homes typical of the non-disabled population. Individuals have the right to make decisions and participate in setting their own routines, creating the structure and design of their home, choosing who comes into their home, and who provides their support services. Individuals benefit from community participation in their own way. Learning is most effective when it takes place in the natural environment – one's own home. Therefore, all services and supports are provided in the context of the home and community environment.

Supported Living works best when an individual is part of an adequate circle of support that includes strong natural bonds of commitment that come from developed relationships. Therefore, an integral part of Supported Living, is assistance to develop and strengthen natural support systems, whether they be family, friends, neighbors, or other individuals in the community. In addition, where necessary, individuals are provided more formalized paid supports. In some cases 24-hour care and supervision may be provided. The service is ongoing for those who need continual supports.

Policy

Westside Regional Center has a sincere commitment to the concept of supported living. Through experience with this service model, we have validated that given the proper supports to live in one's own home, any individual, despite the intensity of their support needs, benefits from the more individualized services that Supported Living offers. For some individuals, the supports required for Supported Living could be extensive.

- **The planning team of an individual receiving SLS will confirm that all appropriate and available sources of natural and generic supports such as IHSS and SSI have been utilized to the fullest extent possible.**

The following guidelines should be considered when determining if Supported Living Services is the most appropriate service option for achieving quality of life for the individual, including protection and enhancement of the individual's health and safety:

1. The individual is 18 years of age or older and has indicated the desire and motivation to increase his/her independence in living.
2. The individual has, or is eligible to receive, financial resources necessary to pay for rent/mortgage, utilities, food, clothing and all other typical living expenses, unless an exception is granted.
3. The individual and, where appropriate, his/her parent or conservator, have chosen supported living services, and have full understanding of any potential challenges.
4. The likelihood exists, given the individual's life circumstances and identified potential resources, that sufficient natural supports can be developed to build a full complement of support resources and avoid total reliance on paid supports.
5. Appropriate services and supports can be identified and are available as needed to protect the health and safety of the individual and of others if he or she has:
 - a. Life-threatening medical conditions,
 - b. The need for continuous nursing care,
 - c. The need for constant supervision because of uncontrolled seizures,
 - d. Physical limitations that require 24 hour personal assistance, or behaviors that could result in a threat to the health or safety of self or others, could result in extensive property destruction or the need for law enforcement intervention, or would likely result in repeated evictions.

Exceptions

Westside Regional Center recognizes that some individual needs are so unique that they may not be addressed in this Service Policy and may require an exception. Such requests for an exception to a Service Policy will be made through Westside Regional Center's Purchase of Service Committee.