



The Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR) is a state affiliate of the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR). Our mission is to support those in recovery from Substance Use Disorders by improving access to Recovery Residences through established standards, a fair and transparent certification process, community engagement, education, technical assistance, research, and advocacy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a recovery residence? Recovery residences provide a homelike setting for individuals recovering from alcohol and substance use disorders by offering peer support; an environment that prohibits the use of alcohol, illegal use of prescription drugs or other illegal substances; assistance with support services and community resources; and is based on Social Model principles. This philosophy promotes norms that reinforce healthy living skills and associated values, attitudes, and connection with self and community for sustaining recovery.

Are recovery residences effective and based on best practice? Research has shown that individuals with substance use disorder who utilize recovery residences demonstrate a greater chance of achieving long-term recovery than those who do not live in a recovery oriented environment. Evidence demonstrates decreased substance use, reduced probability of relapse, lower rates of incarceration, increased employment, and improved family functioning. Further, VTARR and NARR certification standards embrace evidence-based approaches including best practices established by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Is peer support an effective model in recovery residences? Peer support offers credibility and accountability through lived experience and has been proven as an important bridge between treatment and successful long-term recovery. The strength of recovery-focused housing is its ability to provide ongoing peer support while promoting sobriety in a natural home environment or medical facility depending on the number of residents, according to SAMSHA,

What services do recovery residences provide? Recovery residences are divided into levels of support based on the type of residence as well as the intensity and duration. Services provided span from peer- to-peer recovery support (all recovery residences) to medical and counseling services (recovery residences offering higher levels of support). NARR Standards define minimum services for each Level.

Are recovery residence members expected to work and volunteer? Working and volunteering are generally considered vital components of recovery and most homes require such productivity to include continued education. In Level 3 and 4 residences; however, a members' time is more structured and may include numerous recovery activities during the day. In those residences, it may not be reasonable or feasible for residents to also have an outside work or volunteer activity requirement.

Will a recovery residence in my community impact my property value? More than 50 scientific studies have found that community residences for people with disabilities, including recovery residences, do not impact property values, neighborhood turnover, or public safety. Certified homes are required to implement good neighbor practices and are subject to an independent review of community concerns.

What type of zoning is required for a recovery residence? Most recovery residences in Vermont are treated as single-family dwellings with up to eight unrelated adults. Level 3 and 4 homes are often treated as a group home or medical facility depending on the number of residents and types of services offered. Currently, zoning differs from City to Town. Even though people in recovery are a protected class under the federal Fair Housing Act and its Amendments, some local governments around the country under political pressure will illegally discriminate against people in recovery with land use or health and safety ordinances that regulate Recovery Residence above and beyond housing for individuals without a disability. This discriminatory activity is often referred to as Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) and raises barriers for people in recovery to access the housing that many need to live happier healthier lives. With limited resources to navigate the legal system, which can be stigmatizing into itself, Recovery Residence providers are often bullied out of municipalities, leaving local people in recovery without an important resource. In Vermont, most select boards and zoning commissions are made up of well-intentioned volunteers. Efforts are currently under way to provide a common zoning definition for these decision makers to better understand this type of service and for consistency across the State.

Resources:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center/recovery-housing-best-practices-suggested-guidelines>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3057870/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3205983/>
https://4409b08e-4424-4eed-a4a6-f4001c59f839.filesusr.com/ugd/4d734f_31ad95a9824842f9964ea86036ba33b1.pdf
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Recovery-Housing-Issue-Brief_May-2017.pdf?daf=375ateTbd56
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/18_Recovery-Housing-Toolkit_5.3.2018.pdf?daf=375ateTbd56
<https://www.recoveryanswers.org/research-post/outpatient-treatment-sober-living-environments-how-do-clients-do-over-time-when-the-services-are-offered-together/>
https://narronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NARR_Standard_V.3.0_release_11-2018.pdf
https://www.naadac.org/assets/2416/betty_ford_recovery_definition.pdf
<https://www.fletchergroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Oxford-House-Recovery-Homes-Characteristics-and-Effectiveness.pdf>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/recovery-homes-help-people>