

Staffing Approaches for Maternity Homes



Please note: These models provide a rough overview of ways that the work related to managing a home can be accomplished. Many homes blend approaches in a variety of ways. Staff in this context may or may not be defined as an employee by IRS guidelines. www.natlhousingcoalition.org

	Live-In House Parents	Live-in Staff	Rotating / Shift Staff	Shepherding / Host Homes
Description / Overview	A couple or family lives in home with a high degree of authority and folds mothers into family life.	Staff members live with moms, sharing a common life.	Various levels of staff work in shifts within a 24 hour period without living in the home.	An entity serves as a bridge between pregnant women and host home.
Variations	One or both houseparents may work outside the home or exclusively in running the program.	Model includes staff from various circumstances including single women, peer volunteers, women w grown children, etc. Includes both "missionary" and "job" approach.	Roles have various names. Manner in which shifts are divided including amount of overlap time varies.	May include oversight of women living independently as well as w/ host families. Degree of oversight by an administrative body. May be used as a transition step for women leaving program.
Sample programs using this model.	Hope Mansion, Ruth Harbor	St Gianna Home, Maggie's Place	Good Counsel, Our Lady's Inn	Clara's House, Visitation Home Project
Core Orientation	Example of marriage and family	Offering services in context of relationship	Staff with specialized training	Housing without infrastructure costs
Potential Strengths	Model of Biblical family and experience of living in a functional family environment (including problem-solving, arguing/making up, active parenting.)	Modeling a lifestyle of relationship / community.	Able to hire staff members for specific skills and therefore, may be able to have specialized services (i.e. women w addictions, mental illness).	Provides a structure of resources, guidance, and training that can be easily expanded or contracted as needed to meet need.
	Man in home may provide security, ability to do house maintenance, and good modeling of fatherhood.	Larger pool of potential applicants.	Largest pool of potential applicants for jobs and potentially less turn-over.	Women seeking housing may have more variety in housing opportunities that are available.
	Due to nature of relationship between husband and wife, may be easier to have consistency in working with women.	Peer type of communication / relationship may have both advantages (culture relevance, shared experiences) as well as disadvantages (establishing authority).	Model is recognized and used by other service providers. May increase legitimacy with social service community.	Private residences are able to house a long-term guest without the same regulations and overhead expenses associated with group homes.

Potential Challenges	In "parent" model, may be a temptation to treat clients like children.	Turnover amongst staff might be frequent.	Overlapping of responsibility can cause confusion / tension between roles. May make triangulation more prevalent.	May place the liability responsibility on each home/volunteer. May significantly limit the women involved with program (i.e. due to addiction, trauma, criminal history.)
	Man in home may be perceived with suspicion or as a liability. Introduction of single women into marriage/home life requires sensitivity.	Must build structures in order to include men in program in meaningful ways.	Getting all the staff together may be a challenge due to shift structure. May affect training and consistency.	Burden may be placed on one person or family (rather than organization with network/resources) to help the woman and child.
	Potential pool of applicants may be limited and model may limit the women that enter the home for the protection of children / family life (i.e. criminal or drug history.)	Must have clear authority structures that build safety and consistency.	Need to be intentional about building a home environment.	Lack of oversight may reduce the (real or perceived) safety of the mothers. Low-levels of consistency in the experience of the mothers.
Key Suggestions when Using this Model	Regular one-on-ones. House Parents need boundaries. Separate House Parent quarters increases overall health. Need some form of relief staff.	Build in-depth training systems and focus on systems that allow for people to move in and out of roles easily. Have good communication structures in place. Increased number of staff means increased need to build consistency.	For effective functioning, each role must be clearly defined and communication structures are needed.	In order to reduce risk, the following should be considered. 1) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria 2) Host Family clearance and basic requirements 3) Basic Host Home Safety requirements 4) Regular Home Visits 5) Level of Agency Support
Compensation	Varies significantly. Reported responses included -\$400 per month (i.e. the houseparents paid rent) to \$2800 per month.	Varies significantly. Reported responses included \$350 monthly stipend to salaried employees at \$35,000 range.	Compensation is typically hourly or salaried based on responsibilities, degree of training, and market rate.	Providing compensation to host site may be directly linked to assumption of liability (depending on state).
Other Notes	Some homes offer sabbaticals to house parents as part of benefit package for retention.			The National Maternity Housing Coalition has a white paper on this topic.