

## STUDY PROFILE

# Providing Employment Services, Treatment, and Supportive Housing to Individuals with Substance Use Disorder

by Kimberly Foley and Niko Leiva

**Central City Concern, in Portland, Oregon, provides supportive housing, employment services, and treatment to people with substance use disorder (SUD). These services are being evaluated as part of the Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) Project.**

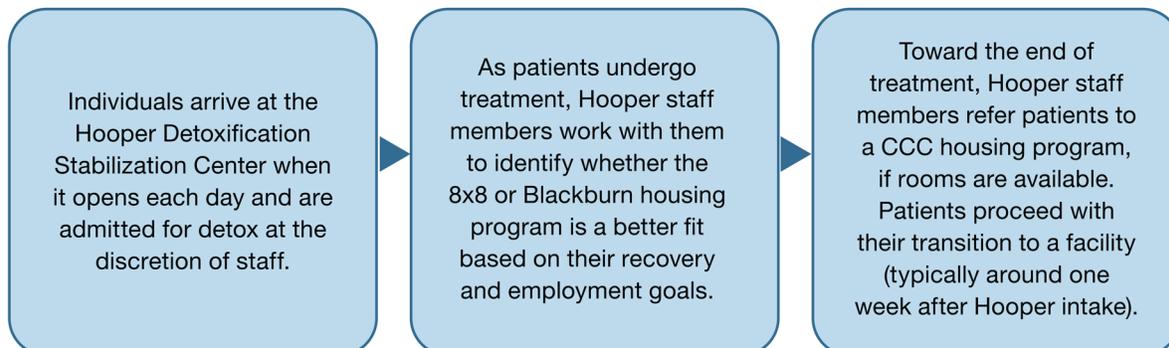
Many individuals with SUD lack access to stable employment as well as safe and stable housing. Central City Concern (CCC) aims to assist individuals with SUD by providing integrated services designed to support sustained recovery. Founded in 1979, the organization operates one federally qualified health center and thirteen additional health care and addiction recovery programs, providing inpatient and outpatient stabilization and treatment services to about 13,000 people annually. CCC oversees more than 2,200 units of affordable housing properties it owns or manages. That includes transitional and permanent supportive housing facilities for a variety of individuals, such as people who are in recovery and individuals who were formerly incarcerated and are experiencing housing instability or homelessness. Many of CCC's staff members are in recovery from SUD themselves and provide peer sup-

port to CCC's residents. CCC also offers employment services at its two Employment Access Centers.

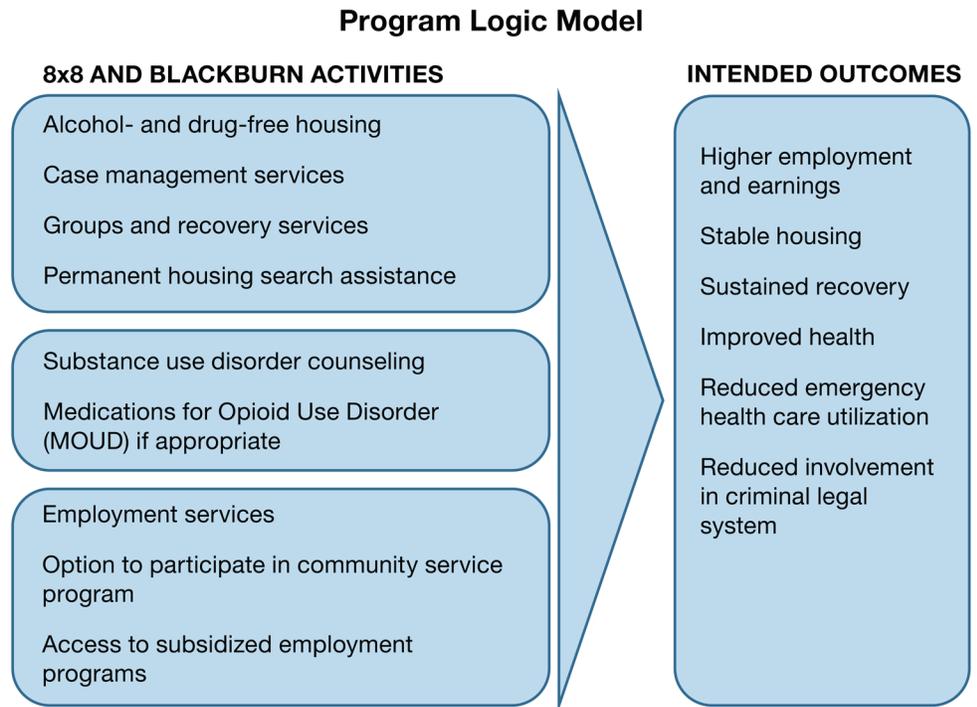
## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Two of CCC's supportive housing programs are participating in the BEES study: one at the Richard L. Harris Building at 8 NW 8th Avenue (also known as the "8x8"), and another at the Blackburn Center in East Portland. The programs serve individuals in recovery from SUD (most commonly alcohol, methamphetamines, opioids, or some combination of those substances). The three core components of the programs are temporary, substance-free housing; treatment and recovery services; and employment services. Individuals with SUD enter one of these programs following treatment at CCC's Hooper Detoxification Stabilization Center, which typically lasts around a week. Individuals who transition out of Hooper and into one of these programs also have the opportunity to enroll in the BEES study.

### Flow from Detox to Supportive Housing



BEES participants (as well as others not in the BEES study) spend about six to eight months in 8x8 or Blackburn, with the goal of obtaining employment and stable housing and remaining in recovery (that is, substance-free) by the time they exit the program. Treatment includes clinical counseling as well as medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) when appropriate. Participants attend a recovery meeting of their choosing in the community. They also take part in employment services, which can include doing community service work and developing job skills as part of CCC's Community Volunteer Corps; working with an employment specialist to identify career goals, prepare for interviews, and write resumes; and participating in one of CCC's two subsidized employment programs. Participants also receive on-site case management services, participate in groups led by the case managers, and work with a housing specialist to look for permanent housing.



## THE EVALUATION

MDRC, in partnership with MEF Associates, Abt Associates, and the Center for Outcomes Research and Education, is conducting the evaluation of the two supportive housing programs. The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is funding the study through the BEES Project. BEES is part of OPRE's [Innovative Strategies for Addressing Employment Barriers Portfolio](#), which seeks to rigorously evaluate the next generation of employment strategies and is partnering with the Social Security Administration on selected evaluations, including this one.

Existing research on employment services, treatment and recovery, and housing is promising. However, there is limited rigorous research on how the combination of such services affects individuals' employment, housing, recovery, and criminal/legal outcomes. This evaluation will contribute to that evidence base. It will also explore the impact on study participants' health care utilization and the associated cost of these services.

The evaluation will include an impact analysis, an implementation study, and a cost study:

- The **impact analysis** will use a [randomized controlled trial design](#) to compare two groups of individuals exiting the Hooper detox program: those who are referred to the 8x8 or Blackburn Center supportive housing programs, and those who are referred to other services in the community. The outcomes for these two groups will be compared over a 12-month period to understand the effectiveness of the programs at achieving their intended outcomes.
- The **implementation study** will use various data sources—including participant and staff interviews and participation data—to document and better understand program operations.
- The **cost study** will assess the costs of delivering program services.

# LOOKING AHEAD

Study enrollment began in late 2021 and will continue for 30 months. The evaluation team will collect administrative data to assess participants’ employment, earnings, and health care utilization. The team will also administer a follow-up survey approximately 12 months after study enrollment to both program and

control group members, covering domains such as service receipt, health, and material hardship. Interviews with program staff members and study participants will provide insights into how the program is being implemented. Data collection and analysis will continue through 2025. The evaluation team anticipates releasing findings based on these analyses in 2027.

## Anticipated Timeline of Project Activities

