

## Strategies to Offer 20 Hours of Individualized Services

HUD now expects transitional housing programs to offer **20 hours per participant of tailored supportive services**. In addition to standard case management and therapy (already provided), programs can meet this requirement by drawing on community resources, volunteers, and partnerships. The ideas below are organized by service type and are broadly applicable to diverse populations (youth, veterans, domestic violence survivors, etc.), supporting both treatment/recovery goals and progress toward employment and income.

### Employment and Income Support

- **Job Readiness Workshops:** Host regular career prep sessions covering résumé writing, interviewing, and networking, led by volunteer career coaches or local job center staff. For example, Goodwill career centers help job seekers build résumés, practice interviews, and learn workplace expectations at no cost. Such partnerships provide expert guidance without adding staffing costs.
- **Vocational Training Partnerships:** Connect participants to free or low-cost job training programs in the community. Many local nonprofits (e.g., Goodwill Industries) offer training in high-demand fields like healthcare, IT, retail, and more. Referring residents to these existing programs leverages in-kind resources to build marketable skills.
- **Volunteer Mentor and Internship Opportunities:** Partner with area businesses and volunteers to create mentorships, internships, or job-shadowing. For instance, companies can offer short-term entry-level positions or host mock interview days for participants. Professionals may even volunteer to speak about their industry or offer tips, providing valuable insight and motivation at no cost.
- **Specialized Veteran/Youth Employment Programs:** Tap into external programs tailored to subpopulations. For veteran residents, collaborate with VA employment initiatives like Compensated Work Therapy or Goodwill's veteran hiring programs to provide paid transitional work experience. For youth, utilize workforce development programs or summer youth employment initiatives. These external programs can fulfill service hours while directly increasing participants' income and job skills.

### Education and Training

- **Adult Education (GED/High School Equivalency):** Facilitate enrollment in free adult education classes for those without a diploma. Local adult learning centers or libraries often offer **GED prep and literacy classes at no charge**. Volunteer tutors can supplement

class time by working one-on-one with participants on reading, math, or test-taking skills.

- **Digital Literacy and Computer Skills:** Leverage public libraries or tech-focused volunteers to run basic computer training. Teaching participants to use email, prepare online job applications, or practice typing can often be done in library computer labs or with donated equipment. Volunteers can assist clients in using computers for job hunting and résumé writing, ensuring everyone gains essential digital skills for the modern workforce.
- **Continuing Education and Certifications:** Help participants access free or low-cost courses that build vocational skills. This could include enrolling in community college workforce programs (many offer tuition waivers or scholarships), accessing online learning platforms (some libraries provide free LinkedIn Learning/Coursera access), or attending free workshops in the community. These educational services can be tailored to individual goals (e.g. a young parent learning a trade, or a DV survivor taking an ESL class) at minimal cost by utilizing existing educational resources.
- **Tutoring and Academic Mentoring:** Use volunteers (including college students or retired teachers) to provide tutoring for those pursuing further education. This might involve a weekly homework help night or mentorship for youth working on high school or college courses. Such academic support, provided in-kind, helps participants improve qualifications and confidence, contributing to better employment prospects long-term.

### Life Skills Development

- **Financial Literacy Workshops:** Offer budgeting and money-management classes using volunteer experts or partner agencies. Local banks or financial counselors might lead free sessions on budgeting, credit repair, saving, and taxes. For example, volunteers through community organizations can provide **financial literacy support** and basic budgeting help to residents. These skills empower participants (including youth with no prior budgeting experience or survivors rebuilding finances) to manage income effectively.
- **Healthy Cooking and Nutrition Classes:** Organize life-skills classes on meal planning, grocery shopping on a budget, and cooking simple, healthy meals. Many communities have nutrition education programs (like **Cooking Matters**, often run by food banks or cooperative extension) that teach low-income families to cook affordable, nutritious meals. Volunteers (e.g. dietetic students or chefs) can lead weekly cooking nights in the housing facility's kitchen, using donated food supplies, to improve nutrition and self-sufficiency.

- **Parenting and Household Management:** Collaborate with family services or experienced volunteers to run parenting courses and home management workshops. These sessions could cover positive parenting techniques, child development, coping with family stress (crucial for young parents or DV survivors), as well as practical skills like time management, home cleaning, and basic repairs. **Volunteer-led life skills classes** – for example, classes on parenting or daily living skills – can be scheduled regularly. Such classes require minimal funds (curricula are often available free, and community experts can be invited to teach).
- **Tenancy and Housing Readiness:** Include workshops on being a good tenant and maintaining housing stability. Local housing nonprofits or case managers can teach about tenant rights, communicating with landlords, budgeting for rent and utilities, and home safety. These life-skill sessions prepare residents for successful independent living and can often be supported by volunteers or partner agencies (sometimes landlords or real estate professionals volunteer to share their tips). All materials can be donated or sourced from HUD-approved curricula, keeping costs minimal.

## Health and Wellness

- **Health Education and Clinics:** Leverage partnerships with community health providers to address physical and mental wellness. Local clinics, health departments, or nursing school volunteers can offer on-site workshops on topics like nutrition, sexual health, managing diabetes, or coping with stress. Periodic **free health clinics or screenings** (for blood pressure, HIV testing, etc.) could be arranged through public health outreach programs. These services support treatment goals (e.g. managing chronic illness or prenatal care for young mothers) without adding cost, since many nonprofits are eager to reach at-risk populations.
- **Exercise and Fitness Activities:** Provide regular opportunities for physical activity to improve mood and health. This can be as simple as daily group walks or stretching sessions led by staff, but also consider volunteer-led exercise classes. Community volunteers have successfully taught shelter residents **activities like yoga, light aerobics, or even dance classes** to encourage fitness. For example, a volunteer yoga instructor or a local YMCAs donating a few gym passes each week can help participants establish healthy routines at no cost.
- **Substance Abuse Recovery Support:** Strengthen recovery by hosting peer-led sobriety supports on-site. Schedule free 12-step meetings (AA, NA) at the transitional housing in partnership with local recovery groups, so participants can easily attend as part of their service hours. You can also invite volunteers in recovery (or partner with a peer recovery coach program) to lead relapse prevention groups or be on-call as **sponsors for**

**participants with addiction.** These supports, which rely on peer volunteers and existing recovery networks, directly further treatment goals and require little or no funding.

- **Therapeutic and Recreational Activities:** Introduce low-cost therapeutic outlets that promote mental wellness and stress relief. Many transitional programs enlist creative volunteers to lead activities like art therapy, music circles, gardening, or meditation groups. For instance, volunteers at a NYC program lead art and creative writing workshops with clients in recovery. Similarly, a volunteer could start a community garden at the facility (as both a calming activity and source of fresh food), or local college students might run a mindfulness meditation group. These wellness services can often be run with donated supplies and talent, greatly enriching participants' quality of life and emotional health.

### Peer Support and Mentoring

- **One-on-One Mentorship:** Establish a volunteer mentorship program to pair participants with a supportive adult or **program alum**. Mentors can meet weekly with their mentee to set goals, practice new skills, and provide encouragement<sup>[15]</sup>. Such relationships are powerful for all populations – e.g. a veteran matched with a fellow veteran mentor, or a young person with a stable adult role model. The time mentors give (often an hour a week) counts toward service hours and is completely free. Screening and training volunteer mentors (perhaps through a partner like Big Brothers Big Sisters or a faith community) ensures accountability and a good fit.
- **Peer Support Groups:** Organize regular peer-led group meetings where residents support each other in a safe space. For example, **weekly house meetings** can be a forum for participants to share wins and challenges, building mutual support. In sober living environments, structured house meetings and group activities have proven critical for long-term recovery. You might have specialized support circles as well – a trauma support group for domestic violence survivors facilitated by a volunteer from a DV agency, or a veterans support group run in collaboration with a local VFW chapter. These groups cost nothing (aside from perhaps coffee and chairs) but foster a sense of community and belonging.
- **Alumni Engagement:** Leverage the experience of former clients who have successfully transitioned out. Invite alumni to return as guest speakers or co-facilitators for workshops on how they maintained housing or stayed sober. Some programs even form an **alumni peer leader group** – past graduates helping to lead activities and mentor current residents. Alumni can often connect especially well with current participants (they “get it”) and typically volunteer their time out of gratitude, providing an inspiring, no-cost resource.

**Social and Community Integration Events:** Coordinate low-cost group outings and social events that encourage peer bonding and life skills practice. Volunteers or community groups can help organize potluck dinners, game nights, or trips to free community events (like job fairs, public concerts, or museum free days). Such activities double as **opportunities for peer networking and support** outside of formal classes. For instance, a church or civic volunteer group might host a monthly dinner at the housing site, giving residents a chance to socialize and practice interpersonal skills in a family-style setting. These events require little funding (often food and space are donated) and enrich the service hours with meaningful relationship-building.

Each of these service ideas uses **existing community resources or volunteer efforts to keep costs low**. By mixing and matching activities from categories like employment, education, life skills, wellness, and peer support, a transitional housing program can easily fill 40 hours a month of individualized services. This holistic approach not only satisfies HUD's requirement but also equips residents with the practical skills, support networks, and confidence they need to achieve self-sufficiency – truly fulfilling the mission of transitional housing.

## Sample Weekly Service Offerings (over 20 hours)

Day	Time	Activity	Hours	Service Type
<b>Monday</b>	9:00–10:00 AM	Case Management Session (Individualized goals)	1	Case Management
	10:15–11:45 AM	Job Readiness Workshop – led by Goodwill volunteer	1.5	Employment Support
	1:00–2:30 PM	Digital Literacy Class at Library	1.5	Education/Tech Skills
	3:00–4:00 PM	Walking Group with Peer Leader	1	Wellness/Fitness
	5:00–6:30 PM	Online Course: Customer Service Skills (Coursera/Library)	1.5	Education/Employment
<b>Tuesday</b>	9:00–10:30 AM	Financial Literacy – taught by bank volunteer	1.5	Life Skills
	11:00–12:30 PM	GED Prep Class at Adult Ed Center	1.5	Education
	2:00–3:30 PM	Art Therapy Session (volunteer-led)	1.5	Wellness
	4:00–5:00 PM	Peer Support Group	1	Peer Support
	6:00–7:00 PM	Evening Peer Mentorship Check-In	1	Peer Support
<b>Wednesday</b>	9:00–10:00 AM	Therapy Session (individual)	1	Treatment
	10:30–12:00 PM	Vocational Skills Training	1.5	Employment Support
	1:00–2:00 PM	Healthy Cooking Class – dietetic volunteer	1	Life Skills/Nutrition
	5:00–6:30 PM	Online Certification: Food Handler Safety (Free Program)	1.5	Education/Employment
<b>Thursday</b>	11:00–12:30 PM	Health & Wellness Class	1.5	Health Ed

	2:00–3:00 PM	Gardening Activity (volunteer-led)	1	Therapeutic Rec
	3:30–4:30 PM	Tenancy Skills Class	1	Life Skills/Housing Readiness
	5:00–6:30 PM	Evening Group Life Skills Activity (e.g. Home Cleaning Demo)	1.5	Life Skills
<b>Friday</b>	9:00–10:30 AM	Internship at Local Thrift Store	1.5	Employment Support
	11:00–12:30 PM	AA/Recovery Group – peer-led	1.5	Treatment Support
	2:00–3:00 PM	Meditation or Yoga Class	1	Wellness
	3:30–4:30 PM	Tutoring or Homework Help	1	Education
	5:00–6:30 PM	Evening Support Group: Trauma-Informed Peer Circle	1.5	Treatment/Peer Support
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00–12:00 PM	Group Community Outing	2	Social Integration
	1:00–3:00 PM	Alumni Speaker Series or Workshop	2	Peer Mentorship/Support
<b>Sunday</b>	1:00–3:00 PM	Community Volunteer Project (e.g., food pantry or cleanup)	2	Social Integration/Employment