

Sober House 101: The Ultimate Sober Living Guide

What is a sober house?

Sober houses are group homes for men or women in recovery from substance abuse. The sober house is typically a large single-family home in a residential neighborhood, led by a House Manager and home to anywhere from four to thirty-four residents. Residents must be medically and clinically stable and tend to their own needs independently. The sober house will likely not offer any services or tangible support services to residents and will require residents to be fully financially self-sustaining through employment or friends and family.

Isn't that just a half-way house?

Well, no. Sober houses are not half-way houses for two main reasons. First, sober houses do not offer clinical services of any sort. A sober house will not offer clinicians, case managers, or any clinical or counseling services. Second, sober houses are nearly all private pay. While half-way houses may accept insurance and offer clinical services, sober houses don't do either of these.

So why should I go to a sober house?

This is a great question, and the answer is "it depends". Sober houses are great for a transition between a residential program and independent living. Sober houses offer a greater degree of independence and freedom, often without a minimum or maximum length of stay. Sober houses often offer a similar level of community and camaraderie as would a structured residential program, without requiring the paperwork and restrictions that would come with a half-way house or other residential program.

How much does a sober house cost?

Sober houses charge rent to residents. Usually, rent is due on a weekly basis, but some charge monthly rates. Nearly all sober houses are private pay and do not accept health insurance. Some sober houses are not-for-profit organizations with subsidies and grants, but most sober houses are for-profit organizations which do not offer subsidies or discounts.

What kind of restrictions are in place at a sober house?

A good sober house will have a clear set of house rules which every resident must follow. Typically, these rules include not possessing or using drugs or alcohol, attending recovery meetings (like A.A. or N.A.), adhering to curfew, and participating in house meetings.

What does it take to get in?

For most sober houses, all it takes is an approved application, demonstrated commitment to your recovery, and initial payment. Most sober houses can quickly approve applicants and schedule a time to move in very quickly. All sober houses require residents be in recovery from addiction and desire not to use drugs or alcohol. Beyond this, the criteria vary greatly between homes.