

Frequently Asked Questions: Terrace at Oak Springs

A home is more than four walls. It's the basic foundation for health and well-being. When someone lives on the street, it is extremely difficult to recover from a mental health issue, substance use disorder or manage a chronic health condition. Integral Care uses housing as a health intervention. With a safe place to live and appropriate support services, recovery from homelessness, mental health issues and substance use disorder begins. People thrive and our community is stronger.

Terrace at Oak Springs is a unique apartment community providing private apartments with onsite support services to adults experiencing homelessness in Travis County. When someone has access to tools like housing to regain health and independence, counseling and a community to support emotional health, primary care to improve physical health, and drug and alcohol treatment to help with recovery, they can reach their full potential and contribute to the community.

What are the features of Terrace at Oak Springs?

Terrace at Oak Springs is an apartment community that includes 50 fully furnished, single occupancy efficiency apartments and an onsite integrated health care clinic – 3000 Oak Springs Clinic. Features include onsite staffing 24 hours a day, onsite laundry facility, outdoor green space, community room with library, computers, and internal and external security cameras. Terrace at Oak Springs is modeled after other successful programs across the country and the first of its kind in Central Texas.

What is 3000 Oak Springs Clinic?

The 3000 Oak Springs Clinic is on the Terrace at Oak Springs property and provides integrated primary health care and mental health care, including support for substance use disorder, to residents of the apartment community. Clinic services are also available to adults in the community who are eligible for Integral Care services. The clinic will be open 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday, and will offer scheduled appointments and a limited number of walk-in appointments. Community members will be able to access clinic services through the same intake and assessment process that Integral Care uses for all of its services, by calling 512-472-4357.

How does Terrace at Oak Springs support the health of its residents?

Terrace at Oak Springs is based on Housing First, an evidence-based model that offers permanent supportive housing (PSH) to address the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, who also live with mental illness, substance use disorder and/or other chronic health conditions. PSH is a type of affordable housing that includes ongoing support services, such as case management, primary and mental health care, substance use treatment and employment services. It is designed for individuals with disabilities (including mental illness) who need housing assistance and ongoing support to live healthy, stable, independent lives in the community. Housing First is a proven solution for people who have experienced chronic homelessness. This model removes barriers to housing that have contributed to people experiencing chronic homelessness in communities across the United States. Chronic homelessness persists in our community because people have barriers to housing. A home is the foundation for recovery from homelessness, mental illness and substance use disorder.

How are residents selected for Terrace at Oak Springs and what are the qualifications?

The Terrace at Oak Springs apartments are for adults who are experiencing chronic homelessness and also live with mental illness, substance use disorder and/or a physical disability. Approximately half of the residents will be veterans. The following is an overview of the steps a potential resident goes through to be considered for an apartment at Terrace at Oak Springs (Terrace). This is a collaborative community process that is governed by regulations of multiple agencies.

1. Coordinated Assessment

For any person to be considered for a Terrace at Oak Springs apartment, they must first complete a Coordinated Assessment (CA). The CA is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CA is a tool that helps determine the type of housing that best matches the needs of the person experiencing homelessness. Once a CA is completed, the person is placed on a list of all people who need housing in Travis County. This list is prioritized based on a person's level of need. Providers across Travis County, including Integral Care, use this list to identify individuals who are next in line for available housing. For more information about the Coordinated Assessment, visit <http://www.austinecho.org/ca/>

To be considered for a Terrace at Oak Springs apartment, a person must be chronically homeless. HUD defines a chronically homeless person as “either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.” A disabling condition is defined as “a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, a serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.” In addition, “a disabling condition limits an individual's ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.”

2. Housing Vouchers

People who live in Integral Care properties may use housing vouchers to cover the cost of rent. Two types of vouchers are used at Terrace at Oak Springs.

a. HUD Project-Based Housing Choice Vouchers is a federally-funded housing subsidy managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) that helps people who have a low income pay rent. 25 Terrace at Oak Springs residents will pay rent using these vouchers, and must meet HACA's screening criteria. Integral Care follows regulations set by HUD and HACA related to the vouchers. For more information about HACA and the Voucher program, visit www.hacanet.org/residents/assisted-housing/.

b. 25 apartments at Terrace are reserved for veterans. HUD-Veterans Affairs Supporting Housing Vouchers is a federally funded housing subsidy that helps veterans experiencing homelessness pay for housing. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) manages the HUD Veterans Affairs Supporting Housing Vouchers program. Integral Care follows regulations set by HUD and the VA related to the vouchers. For more information about the VA and the Voucher program, visit www.hacanet.org/residents/assisted-housing/.

3. Texas Apartment Lease Agreement with Prak Management

All Terrace at Oak Springs residents sign and abide by the standard Texas Apartment Lease Agreement. This is used by many rental properties throughout Travis County. Prak Property Management, the property manager for Terrace at Oak Springs, runs a criminal background check on potential tenants. Prak Property Management enforces the lease. Residents who violate the terms of their lease may be subject to eviction. Prak has been providing property management services in the Oak Springs area since 2010. For more information about Prak, please visit <http://www.prakpropertymanagement.com/home.html>.

4. Who will not qualify for housing at Terrace at Oak Springs?

Registered sex offenders and individuals with a history of arson will not be eligible for housing at Terrace at Oak Springs. Individuals convicted of methamphetamine production within the last year will not be eligible for housing at Terrace at Oak Springs.

How will Integral Care support the safety of residents and neighbors of Terrace at Oak Springs?

Integral Care works to create safe and healthy communities for everyone – our residents, staff and neighbors. Property management staff are onsite at Terrace at Oak Springs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support residents and address any issues on the property. In addition, a security guard is onsite from 9pm to 5am daily. All visitors are required to check in at the front desk with Integral Care staff when visiting residents. To support the safety of our residents, there are interior and exterior security cameras on the property. Because this is a new initiative, as needed, Integral Care and the property management company will reevaluate staffing and security needs.

Integral Care will work with long-time partner Austin Police Department and the local District Rep for the surrounding community should any issues arise. Integral Care also follows the City of Austin’s Good Neighbor Policy and stays in close contact with neighbors and neighborhood associations to respond to any issues as well as provide information about Integral Care and our services.

Will there be staff overnight at Terrace at Oak Springs?

There are two overnight Integral Care staff and one property management staff member onsite 24/7. In addition, there is a security guard onsite from 9pm to 5am.

Do residents pay rent?

Yes. Rent is determined based on an individual’s income and will not exceed 30% of that income. Minimum rent for all residents is \$25 per month and includes all utilities. Rent is subsidized through two different types of housing vouchers provided by HUD.

How long can people live at Terrace at Oak Springs?

Terrace at Oak Springs offers residents private apartments with onsite support services. Residents sign a one-year lease with an annual option to renew. Residents are eligible to renew their lease annually as long as they follow the terms of their lease and do not exceed the income requirement. Most people live in an apartment community like Terrace at Oak Springs for an average of two to three years.

Is Terrace at Oak Springs a homeless shelter?

No. Terrace at Oak Springs is an apartment community. It will be a permanent residence with private apartments for 50 formerly homeless individuals in our community. Terrace at Oak Springs provides onsite support services.

Are community organizations involved with Terrace at Oak Springs?

Yes. Community partners currently include the Austin Police Department, Austin Public Library, Housing Authority of the City of Austin, City of Austin, Austin Public Health, Watershed Department, Mobile Loaves and Fishes, Veterans Administration, Keep Austin Fed and ECHO.

Will Terrace at Oak Springs impact property values?

Property values across the community are changing rapidly. In building Terrace at Oak Springs, Integral Care made a concerted effort to create an environment that preserved the natural landscape and 100-year old oak trees. We approached the architecture and design of the building with the intent of creating a unique, modern design that would positively impact the surrounding community. Integral Care is committed to keeping Terrace at Oak Springs well maintained and being a good neighbor.

How will Terrace at Oak Springs impact public resources?

In addition to providing housing for 50 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, Terrace at Oak Springs also saves our community a considerable amount of public resources. People living on the streets who have conditions such as a mental illness, substance use disorder and chronic health conditions often use crisis and emergency services because they lack a regular source of care. This is expensive for the community. Providing housing and rehabilitation supports offers the opportunity to create long-term stability and better health and is more cost effective due to decreased utilization of health services such as EMS transport and hospital stays. In an analysis of individuals supported by Integral Care, we've seen a reduction of utilization in EMS transports, Austin Police Department response, emergency department visits, inpatient hospitalizations and psychiatric hospitalizations.

Who is Integral Care?

Integral Care supports adults and children living with mental illness, substance use disorder and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our services include a 24-hour helpline for anyone who needs immediate support, ongoing counseling to improve mental health, drug and alcohol treatment to help with recovery, and housing to regain health and independence. Integral Care is uniquely qualified to help individuals who have the most barriers to achieving housing stability. Through our housing programs, we currently provide access to housing and support services to nearly 500 individuals – in properties we own and in privately-owned apartments across the community. Integral Care uses the Housing First model to remove barriers, creating opportunities for individuals to move from homelessness to housing. Integral Care has been providing housing services in our community since the 1980s and adopted the Housing First model in the last decade.

Founded in 1967, Integral Care is a governmental entity that serves as the Local Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority for Travis County. Integral Care was formerly known as Austin Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation Center (ATCMHMR) and Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC). We updated our name in 2017 to make it easier for people to find the care they need and reduce confusion with other public organizations.

How long has Integral Care provided services in the Oak Springs area?

In 1987, Integral Care purchased the property at 3000 Oak Springs Drive. Since that time, Integral Care has provided a variety of programs at that location supporting adults living with substance use disorder including detox, residential and outpatient services. The Oak Springs Treatment Program, still in operation, provided outpatient services there from 1992 to 2016. In 2016, the program moved to another Integral Care location to make room for construction of Terrace at Oak Springs.

For More Information

Questions or additional information? Please contact outreach@integralcare.org or visit integralcare.org/3000-OakSprings.