



Care Enterprise, LLC

Solutions to Complex Problems

## How to License a Group Home for Youth

By Sharman G. Lawson

The steps to get licensed as a residential group home provider can be frustrating. The state licensing application paperwork, policy manual and just everything involved can cause some serious anxiety. Having the heart and desire to make an impact in at-risk youth lives is great, but getting through the licensing process for many is diving into unknown waters.

Knowing exactly what, when and how to complete paperwork and attachments is so very important. Not knowing can cause you a huge amount of money. Unfortunately, most people do not know what they don't know. What you do not know may cause your submitted group home licensing application not to be approved by the state. Also, getting licensed means passing the homes onsite inspection from the state surveyor.

Bottom line, the initial state licensing application paperwork, policy and procedure manual and onsite inspection all must be approved to get licensed through the state. Below are four steps to help you start a residential group home that will operate teen and young adult programs.

1. **Make a Decision** – Know 100% that you definitely want to be a licensed group home provider. A group home is a 24/7 operation. Depending on the state it can cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$75,000 or more to get started. Look at your finances thoroughly. Getting licensed means purchasing or leasing a home or apartment, buying furniture, having a cash reserve, paying for staff and everything else required to get fully licensed. Make sure you are financially prepared.
2. **Decide Where** – Research the city, county, and state you want to get licensed. Every city, county, and state have different regulations and requirements. Decide on the location with the least complex steps, rules, and regulations. Make sure the home address is zoned properly, and find out from the city or county the permit process to get approved. The city, county and state approval is separate.
3. **Licensing Process** – Review the state licensing application, which is usually online, to determine if you are comfortable navigating through the process to get licensed, without using a consultant. Start with the city or county approval process first and then work on the state licensing process. Remember the process and order of steps for approval can be different for each city, county and state.
4. **Research** – Getting licensed is not enough. After you are licensed, you need other essential information. You need to know how to get residents, operate your facility on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis to stay in state compliance. Finally, knowing how to be sustainable, resourceful and control financial cost can make the difference between staying in business and closing your doors.

Sharman G. Lawson is the President of Care Enterprise, LLC. Care Enterprise license residential group homes, non-medical home care agencies and private home care provider agencies (PHCP) license training. Mrs. Lawson's previous experience includes owning a care home consulting and training company that was sold in 2017. Additionally, she has owned a licensed personal care home for the elderly, a host home for the mentally challenged and developmentally disabled, and a licensed childcare center. Sharman is also the author of the e-book *12 Steps to Eliminate Debt Forever!* Visit Care Enterprise, LLC website at [www.careenterprisellc.com](http://www.careenterprisellc.com).

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