



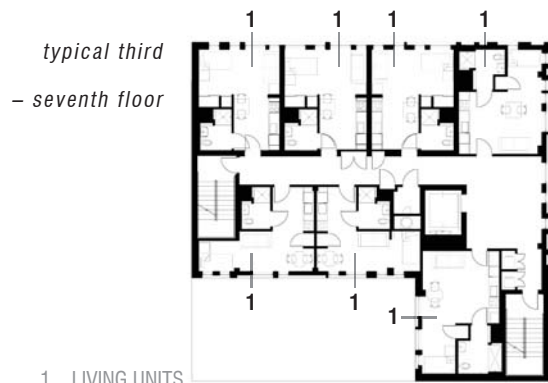
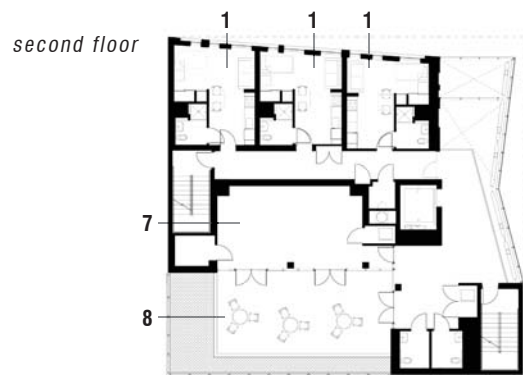
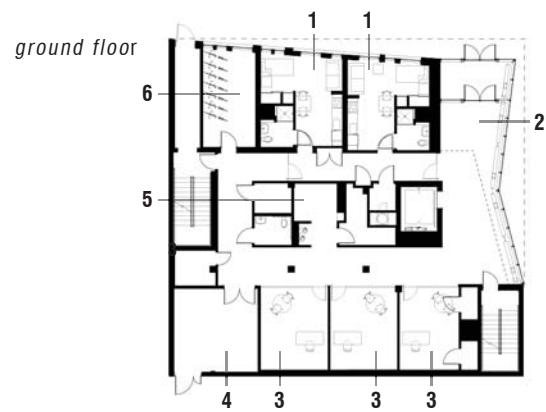
## La Casa

category: architecture

La Casa is a permanent supportive housing facility in the District of Columbia. Rather than function as a shelter, La Casa provides permanent, supportive housing for forty men.

One of La Casa's central design challenges was to create "home" rather than institution. It was repeatedly stressed that the city wanted a building that defies the homeless shelter archetype.

The urban site was a design challenge with strict parameters. Massing was largely predetermined by the need to fit as many units as possible within the envelope defined by zoning. Building system and material decisions were driven by concerns for immediate and long-term cost, maintenance, technical performance, and the desire to achieve a LEED Gold rating. Both the client and the design team also recognized that this project held a potential to symbolize the city's plan to use supportive housing to address chronic homelessness.



- 1 LIVING UNITS
- 2 LOBBY
- 3 SUPPORT STAFF OFFICES
- 4 LOADING
- 5 MAIL ROOM & STORAGE
- 6 BICYCLE STORAGE
- 7 COMMUNITY ROOM
- 8 COURTYARD







# CONTINUUM OF HOMELESSNESS

## At-risk of Homelessness

People at-risk of homelessness have a severe housing burden, or pay more than half of their income to housing.

**Per 1,000 people, 217 in the US are at-risk of homelessness; 199 in the DC metro area.**

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### Temporarily Homeless

The most common length of time that someone is homeless is one or two days.

**Per 1,000 people, 4.5 in the US used a shelter once in a year; 13.4 in principal cities.**

### Homeless for a short amount of time

Half the people who enter the homeless shelter system will leave within 30 days.

**Per 1,000 people, 1.9 in the US are homeless on a given night; 11.8 in DC.**

## RAPID REHOUSING

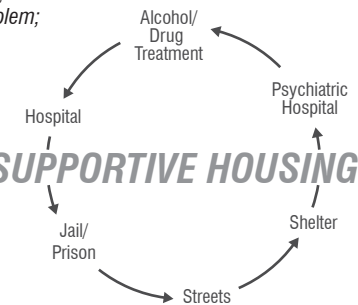
### Chronically Homeless

The chronically homeless are disabled and have been homeless for more than a year or repeatedly in the last few years. They use nearly 60% of the resources spent on emergency and transitional shelters.

**14.6% of the homeless on a given night in the US are chronically homeless; 22.9% in DC**

in DC, of the chronic homeless population  
 12.0% suffer from Chronic Substance Abuse;  
 12.6% suffer from Severe Mental Illness;  
 11.0% suffer from a Chronic Health Problem;  
 18.3% have a Physical Disability;  
 7.2% have Limited English Proficiency;  
 10.0% are U.S. Military Veterans.

## PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



### targeted homeless programs

CoCs, HUD Emergency Solutions Grants, Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, DoE Education for Homeless Children and Youths, HUD-Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing, Supportive Services for Veteran Families

### mainstream programs

Housing Choice Vouchers, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Workforce Investment Act, Head Start

### community stakeholders

DC data is from 2014.

US data is from 2013.

also see Dennis Culhane, "Five myths about America's homeless"

July 11, 2010, The Washington Post





lobby as streetscape lantern

“The District wants to break the notion that homeless care facilities are institutional, generic unpleasant places to be... La Casa will change the perception of the public and the perception of the residents.”

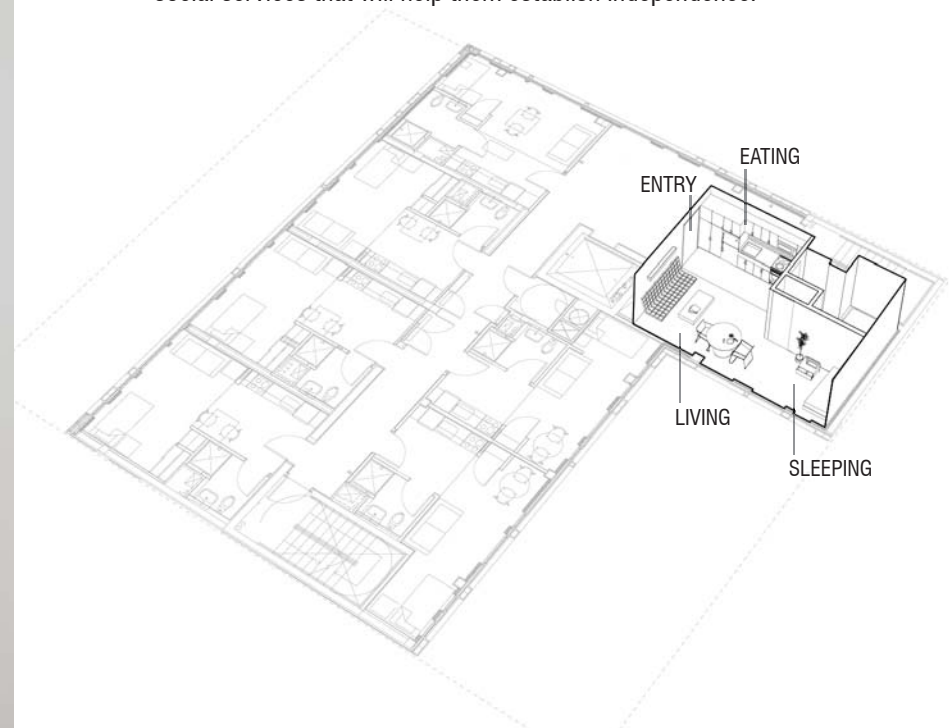
Department of General Services  
[dgs.dc.gov/lacasa\\_project](https://dgs.dc.gov/lacasa_project)



## housing our neighbors

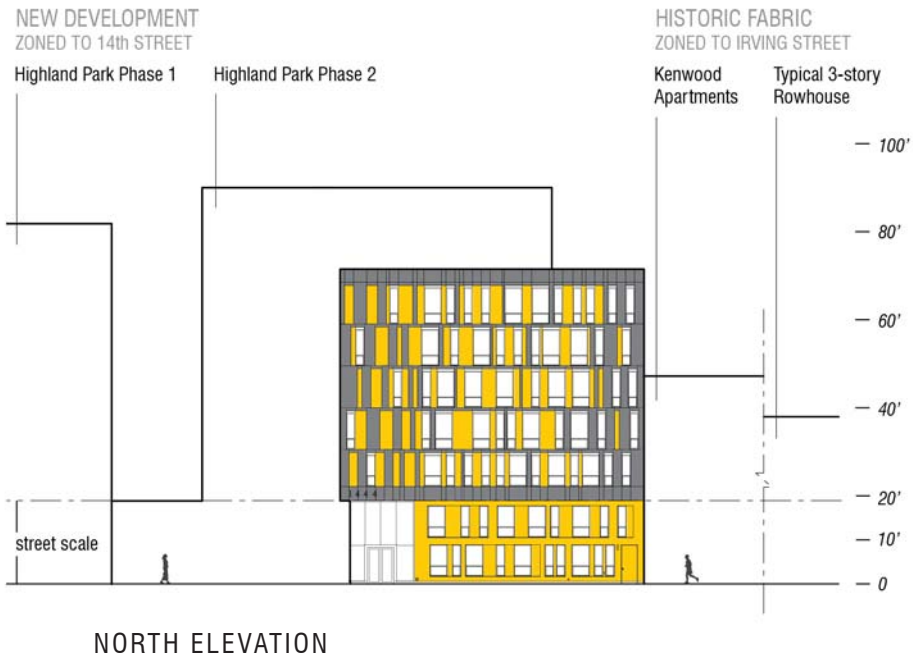
Homelessness is not one experience – it is a continuum. At its least extreme are people that spend a day or two in the shelter system. At its most extreme are the chronically homeless, people who have been homeless for a long time and suffer from a disabling condition. Almost all instances of homelessness are a response to a deficiency of affordable housing opportunities.

As a Permanent Supportive Housing facility, La Casa is home to people with histories of chronic homelessness as well as the medical and social services that will help them establish independence.



Typical Kitchen





La Casa's seven-story height balances the nine-story building facades that face 14th Street and the four and five-story buildings on Irving Street. Just as it supports members of the Columbia Heights community in their acclimation to the modern housing economy, the building is a physical link between the historic fabric of Columbia Heights and the new development at its center.

