

Sober Living Homes (SLH) VS. Behavioral Health Residential Facilities (BHRF) VS. Unlicensed Residences

Facility Types Explained

What is a Sober Living Home?

An SLH must provide a supervised setting to a group of unrelated individuals who are recovering from substance use disorders, and may provide activities that are directed primarily towards recovery from substance use disorders.

Drug and alcohol tests are the only medical or clinical services permitted onsite. ADHS is prohibited from sharing SLH addresses in most cases by A.R.S. §36-2066.

What is a Behavioral Health Residential Facility?

A BHRF is a health care institution that provides treatment to an individual experiencing a behavioral health issue, including substance use disorder. BHRFs are required to provide behavioral health services onsite.

Other Residences Often Confused for SLHs

Only facilities that meet the definition of an SLH can be required to be licensed as one. Facilities that provide a sober setting, but do not provide supervision (ex: Oxford House model) are not SLHs. Conversely, a facility that provides or openly allows the use of alcohol or drugs would not be an SLH, even if they have a manager.

Licensing Info

Tools for the Public



www.azdhs.gov/licensing
Find more detailed information about all
of the licensees regulated by ADHS



www.AZCareCheck.com
Review 3-year history for licensees,
including inspections and enforcement



app.azdhs.gov/ls/online_complaint
Submit a complaint against a licensee or a
provider that should be licensed



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH SERVICES

LICENSING

Sober Living Homes & Behavioral Health Residential Facilities

How to find information about licensed facilities
and identify facilities that should be licensed

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Division of Public Health Licensing



Where to Report Other Issues and Concerns

ADHS Authority:

- ADHS can investigate allegations that an unlicensed facility is operating in a manner that would require licensure. If substantiated, a cease and desist order and fine may be issued.

Resources to Report Other Concerns:

Billing issues, including fraud:

- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)
- Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions (DIFI)

Criminal activity:

- Law enforcement

Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of Vulnerable Adults:

- Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Adult Protective Services (APS)

Suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment:

- Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS)

Suspected Human Trafficking:

- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)



How to Identify Unlicensed SLHs

Elements of an SLH:

- Residents NOT provided OR allowed to openly use alcohol/drugs
- Manager lives onsite, but staff is not required to be present 24/7
- Residents are not related to each other
- All residents are at least 18 years old
- No medical/clinical services onsite, other than alcohol/drug testing
- NOT eligible for reimbursement through AHCCCS and insurance
- Statute does NOT prohibit unlicensed facilities from using title "sober living home"

Questions Asked During Unlicensed SLH Investigations:

- Does a manager live at the residence? If so, what are they responsible for?
- Do any families or relatives live at the home together?
- How old are the residents of the home?
- Do people in the home openly drink alcohol or use drugs? Are drugs/alcohol provided by the manager?
- Do the residents receive any counseling or other services onsite?
- Do residents receive counseling or other recovery services from an outpatient treatment clinic or other provider?



How to Identify Unlicensed BHRFs

Elements of a BHRF:

- Staff required to be onsite 24/7
- Medical records onsite identifying each resident's behavioral health issue and treatment plan
- Behavioral health services, such as counseling, must be provided onsite
- Medication administration may occur onsite
- Usually eligible for reimbursement through AHCCCS and insurance
- Statute prohibits unlicensed providers from indicating that they are providing behavioral health services

Questions Asked During Unlicensed BHRF Investigations:

- Is the facility advertising behavioral health services or using a name that indicates they are a behavioral health facility?
- Do they have medical records onsite for residents?
- Is medication being administered at the facility?
- Is counseling or any other type of clinical service being provided onsite?
- Are residents receiving detox services onsite? (May indicate that a higher-level license is required)