

# *Oxford House Association Manual*®

**Coordinating A Sound System  
For Recovering Alcoholics and Drug Addicts to Help Themselves**



*Assuring Oxford House™ quality –*

**HOUSING,  
FELLOWSHIP,  
SELF-RELIANCE,  
SELF-RESPECT,  
FOR RECOVERING INDIVIDUALS**



*Commemorative Edition*

14<sup>th</sup> Oxford House World Convention

Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

September 13 to 16, 2012

*Oxford House, Inc.*, the umbrella organization of the national, self-help, network of individual Oxford Houses, is a non-profit corporation, which provides charters, at a nominal charge, to recovering alcoholics and drug addicts who want to establish new Oxford Houses.

## *Oxford Houses are self-run because –*

*Recovering individuals value mutual support*

*Self-management is cost-effective*

*Self-reliance leads to self-respect*

*Self-respect validates sobriety*

*Recovery requires sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse*

*Comfortable sobriety takes time to develop*

*Self-financing avoids dependency*

*Renting houses avoids wealth accumulation*

*Absence of wealth accumulation keeps focus on recovery and quality control*

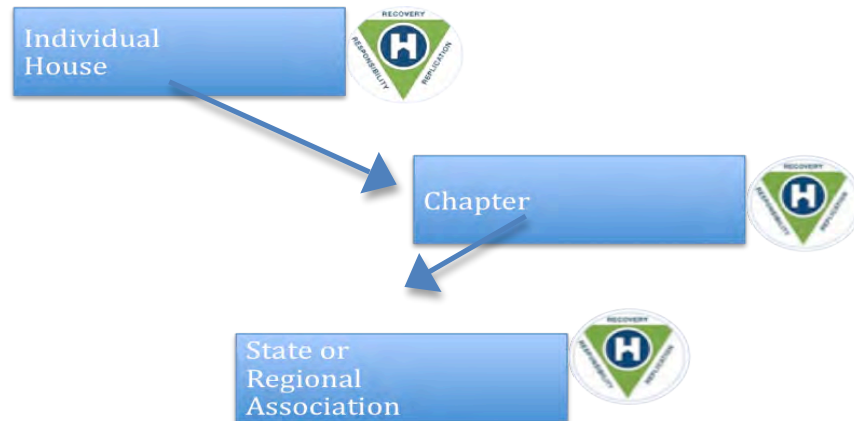
*Quality control requires standardized operations*

*Standardized operations requires knowledge transfer and rigorous self-monitoring*

*Good organization encourages quality control*

# The Oxford House Manual<sup>®</sup> – Blueprint of Oxford House<sup>™</sup>

The individual Oxford House<sup>™</sup> is the building block and foundation of the successful International Network of Oxford Houses. The Oxford House Manual<sup>®</sup> is the blueprint for the standardized processes and procedures used by each and every Oxford House. **Part of the mechanism for assuring that each and every Oxford House follows the standard processes and procedures is an overall organization of Oxford House that assures timely transfer of knowledge and assurance of quality control – from the establishment of a new Oxford House through the formation of a state or regional Association and the annual Oxford House World Convention.**



The basic organization of Oxford House is from the bottom/up. It is a grassroots organization. **Tradition Five states that each individual Oxford House is *autonomous*. That means that once it gets its permanent charter the individual house can do whatever a majority of its members decide and it has one vote in the governance of the overall Oxford House organization.** However, even with a permanent charter, the individual house has to follow the conditions of its charter and the other mutual support organizations of Oxford House such as chapters and regional/state Associations, have a responsibility to assure that it does. If the individual Oxford House violates its charter, it can lose it. The Board of Directors of Oxford House, Inc has granted sole authority for charter revocation for cause to Oxford House World Services and only Oxford House World Services. Of course, “for cause” never takes place if the individual house follows the rules and if mutual support organizations of Oxford House work with an individual house not in compliance with its charter so that it takes corrective action and gets back on track.

**The best way to assure that every house stays on track is for chapters to effectively inform, train and assure quality of individual houses within their geographic areas. The best way for Chapters to stay up-to-date is to be trained and encouraged by State or Regional Associations.**

## State/Regional Association Organization

The Regional Association is democratically organized just like an individual Oxford House or Chapter. The membership of the Regional Association is made up of Chapter Chairpersons within the state or region, any resident or alumni World Council representative members residing within the state or region, one alumni member recommended by chapters [limited to one for every three chapters] and officers elected by the association members for the duration of their term of office.

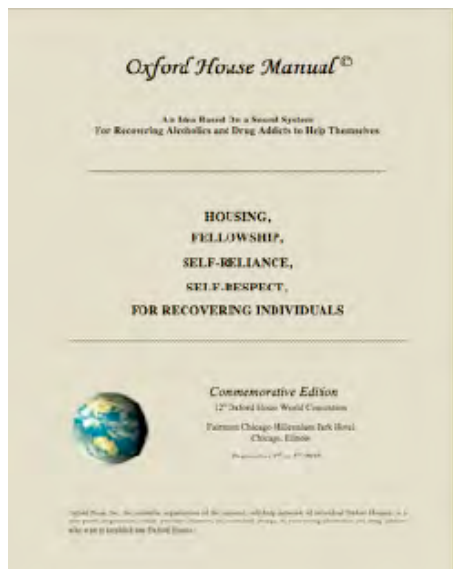
## Association Responsibilities

As a grass-roots, democratically-run organization Oxford House understands that important decisions come from the bottom of the organization up. It also understands that good quality control is essential for protecting the good name and reputation of Oxford House. An Oxford House State or Regional Association has as its primary purpose the assistance of Chapters within its area by providing training, technical support and assistance in expansion through the development of new houses.

Each Association has a three-fold mission: [1] internal knowledge transfer and quality assurance, [2] development to meet the need for Oxford House recovery beds to satisfy state or regional demand, and [3] public relations to educate the public about Oxford House.

### *Internal Knowledge Transfer and Quality Assurance Monitoring*

Every Oxford House™ has either a temporary or permanent charter. The charter gives each individual house the right to hold itself out as an Oxford House, to use the Oxford House system of operation and to have an equal vote in decisions affecting Oxford House as a whole. The charter also places upon each Oxford House™ the duty to comply with the three conditions of each Oxford House charter: [1] the group must be democratically self-run following the standard process and procedures of the Oxford House Manual®, [2] the group must be financially self-supporting and pay all its bills on time, and [3] the group must immediately expel any resident who returns to using alcohol or drugs.



The Oxford House Manual® is the blueprint for each Oxford House to follow to comply with its charter and to assure that the residents can gain sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse. There is no magic way that the individuals living in an Oxford House can understand the processes and procedures set forth in the Oxford House Manual®. Learning the processes and procedures that for more than three decades have made Oxford Houses so successful requires knowledge transfer and explanation.

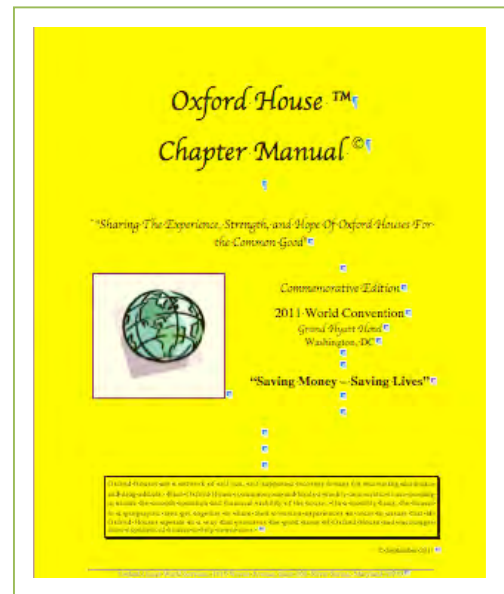
The primary way that such knowledge is transferred from experienced Oxford House residents and alumni to newcomers is at the individual house level. However, it is also transferred through training workshops and outreach workers in the field. The state and regional Oxford House Associations should exercise leadership in organizing training

workshops, conferences and conventions to facilitate the sharing of knowledge about the Oxford House concept and system of operations. Knowledge transfer or training is an on-going necessity because within individual Oxford Houses and chapters there is always resident turnover. Newly recovering individuals are coming into Oxford Houses all the time and residents who have become comfortable in sobriety are always moving out. At the chapter level, the frontline for sharing strength, experience and hope, knowledge transfer should be constantly taking place among some of the residents. However, formalized workshops, conferences and conventions continue to be best practice for teaching the Oxford House process, procedures, practices and policies. Each Association should make training a top priority. Teaching newcomers the Ox-

ford House system of operations begins with encouraging the formation of local chapters and frequent workshops to acquaint all residents of individual Oxford House with the processes and procedures spelled out in the Oxford House Manual<sup>®</sup>.

Chapters can be formed with as few as two or three Oxford Houses. When a chapter reaches twelve [12] individual houses it is a good idea to encourage the chapter to divide into two chapters of six [6] houses each. If chapters are working to expand capacity to meet demand, it will not take long for the size of each chapter to quickly reach a dozen houses again. Chapters work best when there are ten [10] to twelve [12] individual houses in the chapter. A larger number of houses tend to be less manageable. Therefore, Chapters divided whenever they have more than 12 houses. Such divisions should make sure that the resulting Chapters are treated equally.

Because chapters meet once a month, they will know when a member house is having problems. The chapter – like the individual house – is formally organized and has a good blueprint for staying organized by following the Oxford House Chapter Manual<sup>®</sup>. The Association uses its influence to organize Chapters and teach the members of the Chapter the blueprint contained in the Chapter Manual. The Chapter is a frontline teacher of residents in individual houses both through the sharing that takes place once a month at the chapter meeting and regular workshops. It also encourages mutual support among individual houses and promotes joint activities to foster sober socialization between individuals in recovery working toward sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse – from social events to car washes to raise money for conventions, conferences or expansion.



Quality assurance monitoring takes many forms. Sometimes individuals in the recovery community unrelated to Oxford House will notify Oxford House World Services that a particular house seems to be off-track. The Association is often the first responder to such complaints. Other times chapters will become too zealous in monitoring individual houses and the Association will have to mediate disputes between the chapter and the individual house. Generally, the Association will rely upon data collection and analysis to monitor quality assurance.

### *Collecting and Using Data*

From the beginning of Oxford House in 1975, the men and women in Oxford House have provided data about all their operations so as to better know how well the system of operations serves the common goal of achieving sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse. Part of the checks and balance Oxford House uses to keep data accurate involves verification by different entities within the organization and careful analysis and evaluation. Houses help each other to comply with data requirements at the chapter level and Associations help chapters learn the importance of maintaining good data banks. For example, knowing the number of applications received each month versus the number of applicants accepted for membership in a house is an important data point for evaluating the need for additional houses. Data about the number of ex-

pulsions because of relapse or non-payment of an equal share of expenses can inform a chapter or the Association about a house's understanding of the standard system of operations. Data about where residents lived just prior to an Oxford House can inform about whether a house is recruiting new members from a broad base. Data about length of sobriety can affirm the value of Oxford House living. Data about successful exits can affirm that Oxford House is a path to sobriety comfortable enough to avoid relapse.

The Association should make certain that useful data works its way up to it and then use it appropriately. The annual resident profile survey conducted by Oxford House World Services is an example of detailed data collection that provides a good benchmark for Associations to follow. However, monthly house activity reports are equally important. How many applications does each house receive each month? How many are accepted as residents? How many residents are asked to leave and why? How many residents leave voluntarily and how much sobriety do they have? All of this data helps to quantify demand and may show whether or not a particular house is on track. Associations should work closely with Oxford House World Services to make sure that it has up-to-date information about the houses in its region including applications, resident turnover and survey data related to resident profiles.

### *Duties of Association Officers*

The duties of the State or Regional Association Officers are spelled out in the Association By-Laws. Remember that Officers are elected for a one-year term of office and may be re-elected but not for more than two consecutive terms. The Statewide Development of Oxford Houses Guidelines help State or Regional Associations to understand and work closely with Oxford House World Services which has the sole responsibility for training and supervising outreach workers employed to fulfill contracts or agreements with government agencies or foundations.



The individual Oxford House is at the foundation of the entire Oxford House worldwide organization. Each house has a charter. With that charter the house – not any individual or group of houses – has an individual vote to determine overall policies related to Oxford House as a whole. Each house has a vote to elect members of the Oxford House World Council – the organization that plays an important role in advising Oxford House, Inc. about overall policy choices affecting the organization, expansion and general policies of Oxford House. The organization is structured to assure that it remains a grassroots organization focused solely on improving the opportunities for long-term recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction and co-occurring mental illness.

# **BY-LAWS OF OXFORD HOUSE FOR STATE and REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

## **Statement and Purpose**

The state and regional association was created to assist chapters within the region; in the expansion of new houses and to provide training and support. Changes in these by-laws require a two-thirds majority vote by the association members. In keeping with the Oxford House concepts, the regional association shall not act as a governing body.

## **Article I: Regional Association Members**

Members of the state and regional association shall consist of all chapter chairpersons, association officers, committee chairs, world council members, and no more than one alumni member for every three chapters. Outreach workers are encouraged to participate but in an advisory capacity.

## **Article II: Officers**

The association shall elect officers consisting of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, parliamentarian, secretary, treasurer, state services chair, finance and budget chair, and alumni coordinator. These officers shall be elected every January by the association and shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected, but not for more than two consecutive terms.

### **Chairperson's Duties:**

1. To conduct and lead state association meetings;
2. To encourage the cooperation and fairness of other association members;
3. To set an agenda for each association meeting;
4. To be the official spokesperson for the region with respect to the state association and the Oxford House region, as a whole; and
5. Audit the state association checking account before each meeting with the treasurer and finance and budget chair.

### **Vice-Chairperson's Duties:**

1. The same as the duties of the chairperson whenever the chairperson is not available to conduct business;
2. The vice-chairperson serves until the chairperson returns or a new chairperson is elected; and
3. Assist the state services chairs with chapters that need help.

### **Parliamentarian Duties:**

1. He/She shall attend all meetings and act as the advisor of parliamentary rule of order with regard to the meeting and agenda and aid the new chairperson in the transition process;
2. He/She shall ensure compliance of the state association bylaws and resolutions; and

3. He/She shall maintain all current changes or additions in written form. Copies of the updated bylaws and resolutions shall be forwarded to the members of the association for approval. Changes or additions to the regional association by-laws require a 2/3-majority vote by the membership.

**Secretary's Duties:**

1. Record accurate minutes of each regional association meeting;
2. Keep a log of all regional association meeting minutes;
3. Mail out copies of minutes to all members of the regional association; and
4. Mail out any public relations correspondence and letters of appreciation.

**Alumni Coordinator Duties:**

1. Establish a link with Oxford House alumni;
2. Encourage involvement of the alumni; and
3. Mail newsletters and flyers for events to alumni.

**Treasurer's Duties:**

1. Set up and maintain a bank checking account in the name of the regional association;
2. The signatures shall be the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and another regional association member with at least two signatures required;
3. Set up a ledger book to record dues received and dues that are outstanding and submit a financial report to the secretary at the regular meetings;
4. Audit the regional association checking account before each meeting with the chairperson and finance and budget chair; and
5. To present a written report at the regional association meetings including the following:
  - a. Bank balance for the previous month;
  - b. Checks written since the last report;
  - c. Monies deposited since the last report;
  - d. Present bank balance;
  - e. Amount still to be deposited; and
  - f. A list of chapters with outstanding dues.

**Finance and Budget Chair Duties:**

1. Audit the regional association checking account with the chairperson and treasurer bi-monthly;
2. Manage the reserve account established by the regional association;
3. Act as chairperson of finance and budget committee;
4. Chair the committee for the annual planning of the budget;
  - a. The committee shall consist of regional association treasurer and vice-chair as standing members and three at large Oxford House resident or alumni members;
  - b. The budget committee shall elect officers for the committee as deemed necessary;
  - c. Annual budget shall be presented by February of each year for a simple majority approval by association members; and
  - d. Committee shall review budget quarterly.



### **Regional Services Chair Duties:**

1. Encourage all chapters to share their experience, strength and hope;
2. Assist chapter housing service committees to develop programs for starting new houses;
3. Provide support to existing chapters and assist with start-up of new chapters where needed;
4. Assist in establishing housing services committees in each chapter in the region;
5. Provide communication between treatment providers and the regional association;
6. Develop ideas to help chapters fill vacancies;
7. Assist with scheduling and coordination of regional workshops;
8. Work closely with the vice-chairperson on matters concerning chapters.

### **Article III: Voting Members**

The association shall grant permanent voting privileges to chapter chairpersons, world council members, and one alumni member for every three chapters.

#### **Chapter Chairpersons:**

1. Must attend all meetings;
2. Report on the status of his/her chapter;
3. Deliver state association dues to the treasurer;
4. Turn in chapter audit to the treasurer; and
5. Turn in chapter summary to the secretary.

#### **Voting Alumni:**

1. Must be a former member of an Oxford House who has maintained good standing;
2. Must attend all meetings;
3. May be elected to a two-year term, not to exceed five consecutive terms; and
4. Encouraged to serve as a role model and mentor.

#### **World Council Members:**

1. Should attend all meetings;
2. Report on the activities of the World Council;
3. Maintain communication between the regional association and the World Council; and
4. Advise the regional association in matters relating to the Oxford House traditions.

### **Article IV: Meetings**

1. The regional association shall convene every other month beginning in January every year;
2. Time and location of meetings will go in succession by chapter number.
3. Consequences can be considered for non-compliance.

## **Article V: Dues**

1. Chapters will pay dues to the regional association at the rate of \$3.00 per bed per month; and
2. Dues are to be paid monthly at each regional association meeting to the treasurer.

## **Article VI: Reimbursements**

1. An authorized expense claim must be submitted to the association for reimbursements for out of pocket expenses incurred for service work for the state association; and
2. The association shall vote to pay such expenses; a simple majority is needed to pass.
3. All motions to spend Regional Association Oxford House money, budgeted by the Budget & Finance Committee, must identify which part of the budget the money will come from, and, there must be sufficient funds in that budget to cover the expense. All proposals to spend money that exceed the funds available in that part of the budget must be referred to the Budget & Finance Committee to determine how the budget can be reallocated to cover the proposed spending. An urgent matter requiring the attention of the Regional organization can be resolved by a 2/3 vote of the membership.

## **Article VII: New Chapters**

1. Before granting voting membership privileges to a new chapter in the regional association, the new chapter must attend two regional association meetings in a row and the following must be in order;
2. Establish a checking account in the name of the new chapter, and have submitted a request to Oxford House World Services for chapter recognition;
3. During the second regional association meeting the new chapter may ask to become a voting regional association member, provided that Oxford Inc./Oxford World Services has recognized the new chapter; and
4. A majority vote of the regional association is needed to grant voting membership privileges.

## **Article IX: Dissolution**

1. In the event that the Association is to be dissolved, the assets of the Association shall be distributed as follows:
  - A. To all the local Oxford House Chapters within the Region or
  - B. To Oxford House Inc. or
  - C. In the event options A and B are not available: To a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized as a 501(c)(3) corporation and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and which agrees to administer the assets of this Association in accordance with its goals and purposes.
2. A motion for disposition of the assets of the Association must be approved by two-thirds of its voting members present at a duly noticed meeting. [Individual houses within an Association must be notified in writing at least five days before such a meeting.]

**The Following Forms Used by State and Regional Association are available at the website and can be downloaded:**

- **Association Meeting Agenda**
- **Chapter Officers Directory**
- **Chapter Summary Report**
- **Chapter Treasurer Report**
- **Oxford House Activity Report**
- **State Dues Ledger**
- **State Association Data Base**

*The Association form set is an essential tool for keeping records at the Association level so that subsequent Association members know what has taken place and to prepare uniform records so that every Oxford House that is part of an Association is fully informed.*

The forms are designed to provide the orderly procedures that are part of the disciplined democracy used by Oxford House at all levels of the organization.

Get a full set of forms developed for use by State and Regional Associations by downloading from the Oxford House website: [www.oxfordhouse.org](http://www.oxfordhouse.org) under “Publications/General” then

<b>OXFORD HOUSE TRADITIONS</b>
1. Oxford House has as its primary goal the provision of housing for the alcoholic and drug addict who wants to stay clean and sober.
2. All Oxford Houses are run on a democratic basis. Our officers serve continuous periods of no longer than six months..
3. No Member of an Oxford House is ever asked to leave without cause -- drinking, drug use, or disruptive behavior.
4. Oxford House members realize that active participation in AA and/or NA offers assurance of continued sobriety.
5. Each Oxford House should be autonomous except in matters affecting other houses or Oxford House, Inc., as a whole.
6. Each Oxford House should be financially self-supporting.
7. Oxford House should remain forever non-professional.
8. Propagation of the Oxford House, Inc. concept should always be conceived as public education.
9. Members who leave an Oxford House in good standing should become associate members

## *Oxford House:* Good Neighbors – Good Citizens

Oxford House™ is organized from the bottom-up with Oxford House, Inc. serving as the nonprofit umbrella that is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as qualifying under §501[c][3] of the federal tax laws.

Its sole purpose is to help recovering alcoholics, drug addicts and those with co-occurring mental illness to achieve long-term recovery based upon sobriety comfortable enough to avoid a return to drinking alcohol or using illicit drugs. Its website is: [www.oxfordhouse.org](http://www.oxfordhouse.org) and mailing address is: 1010 Wayne Ave. Suite 300, Silver Spring, MD 20901. Telephone: 301-587-2916 • Fax: 301-589-0302

# *Oxford House*<sup>™</sup>

1975-2012

*37 Years of Organized Self-Help To Enable Alcoholics and Drug Addicts to  
Recover Without Relapse*

- Providing Sole Authority for Oxford House Charters
- Providing Technical Assistance to Establish New Oxford Houses
- Providing Technical Assistance to Keep Existing Oxford Houses on Track
- Providing Organization of Chapters to Help Houses Help Themselves
- Providing the Time, Living Environment and Support to Enable Alcoholics and Drug Addicts to Achieve Recovery Without Relapse
- Providing the Legal, Philosophical, and Scientific Framework for a Cost-effective, Worldwide Network of Supportive Recovery Housing.

***Oxford House World Services***

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