

Demystifying The Village Model



Victory LaFara, MSW (They/Them)

Dignity Village Program Specialist 8 years
Macro MSW: alternative shelter, leadership, & qual research
Principle Investigator Micro Village Expansion Project study
Director C(3)PO emergency response villages 3 years
HSD Lived Experience Advisory Committee 2 years
Community Organizer Village Federation
President Village Autonomy Support Services
5 years lived experience homelessness
12 years professional experience in homeless services



Lisa Larson (She/Her)

Public Health Researcher
Dignity Village Board Chair 10 years
Micro Village Expansion Project Steering Team
C(3)PO village advisor
Sunderland Neighborhood Association Chair
Vice President Village Autonomy Support Services
Small business owner
Village Federation delegate

What is the Village Model?

A 501c3 coop shelter, democratically administered by the membership and council elected from the membership. Villagers are the membership of the nonprofit. Their voting power is legally binding, not euphemistic.

People confuse villages with the physical pods and overlook the program model. However, the success of the village model is its democratic design. Which builds on the healthy ways that poor people survive poverty: by building community support networks.



The Village Model repairs and replaces critical disconnects, restoring stability to a person's life. The Village Model invests heavily in personal development and naturally fits trauma informed care. Self-governance develops important skills including: communal leadership, social intelligence, and professional experience. Empowerment over the rules and enforcement ensures that the village conditions are appropriate safe, and consistent with the values of the people living in the village.



Origins

Dignity Village was the first Village. It began as a direct action social justice movement led by unhoused people in 2000. Inspired by movements such as Civil Rights, British squat communes, and Global Justice, they campaigned using demonstrations (“shopping cart parades”), press conferences, civil disobedience (illegally camping on public property), and protests in City Hall. In the end, they won use of City land to provide a shelter at their current location by the airport.

<https://www.facebook.com/DignityVillageInc>



Leadership Programming

- Dignity Village leadership is supported by a full time Macro MSW providing professional training, advising, data management, contracting, and advocacy.
- Elected villagers gain training and on-the-job experience in nonprofit administration.
- Elected villagers appoint village members to coordinate 23 departments, including administering 3 small businesses.
- We are also highly active in the Village Federation, neighborhood associations, and research.



What amenities does Dignity Village provide?

- 45 private structures with solar power
- Large indoor meeting hall (for meetings, trainings, social functions, and cooking)
- Shower & running water
- 4 portable toilets (flush toilets are in permit process)
- 2 offices (Board & VIC)
- Gardens (more soon across the street)
- Guest shelter & greenhouse
- Outdoor common spaces
- Security check-in at gate
- Wifi
- Donations Center
- Production areas for small businesses
- Wood Shop
- Metal forge
- Garbage / recycling service
- Mail
- Phone



Mobile Services

Dignity has found that we are best served by specialized mobile services.

- Mobile services ensure continuity of relationships and services no matter where a person may go, should they leave the village for any reason.
- Specialized services ensure people are getting high quality comprehensive support instead of an under-resourced shelter staff trying to master all of the systems.
- An embedded service navigator would greatly enhance mobile services' ability to connect and stay connected to villagers.





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QUESTIONS?

Victory@dignityvillage.org

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