

**Shared Living Arrangements (SLAs) Fact Sheet**  
**Approved by the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board on**  
**May 21, 2010**

Definition:

A Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) is a separately contained living unit in which more than one adult sex offender in treatment resides for the purpose of increased public and community safety, increased accountability, intensive containment, and more consistent treatment interventions, provided by treatment providers that are approved through the Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB).

The benefits of a SLA include:

- Increases community and victim safety
- Requires increased monitoring while living in the community (e.g. weekly schedules, accountability logs, work schedules, and journals)
- Provides for frequent inspection and monitoring by members of the community supervision team, and more intensive treatment involvement (Minnesota DOC, 2004)
- Lowers sexual recidivism for moderate to high risk sex offenders (SOMB, 2004)
- Decreases non-sexual recidivism (SOMB, 2004)
- Decreases involvement in high risk behaviors, supervision non-compliance, and treatment contract violations (SOMB 2004; Lutze et al, 2009)
- Increases earlier detection of offender recidivism and violation behavior by treatment providers, supervising officers, and law enforcement (SOMB, 2004)
- Increases offender engagement in treatment and compliance, and provides structure and consistency for the offender (Lutze et al, 2009)
- Increases offender accountability and reduces criminal thinking, including the expectation that all offenders living in SLAs will report any violations to the Community Supervision Team (CST) (Minnesota DOC, 2004)
- Strengthens the effectiveness of the community supervision team, and provides the offender with a closer connection to treatment and the team
- Offers a creative, cost-effective way to enhance community safety<sup>1</sup>
- Provides monitored housing options for sex offenders, including reentry from the Department of Corrections and Division of Youth Corrections and residential treatment programs
- Reduces isolation, anonymity, privacy, and secrecy<sup>2</sup> (Wilson et. al., 2009)

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<sup>1</sup> Sex offenders living in SLA's pay for their own housing, treatment, and monitoring services.

<sup>2</sup> Social support and stable housing have a direct link to reduction in loneliness, negative social influences, and lifestyle instability, which are known to lead to recidivism among sex offenders

- Promotes healthy adult relationships, lifestyle, and community activities<sup>3</sup> (Grubin, 1997; Willis, 2008)
- Is unobtrusive to neighbors, although landlords and property management professionals are always informed of the sex offense and registration requirements
- Approval of the SLA residence is based on a variety of public safety factors (SOMB 2004)
- Provides sex offenders with the type of support<sup>4</sup> that research shows decreases criminal and technical violations (SOMB, 2004)
- Failure to comply with the terms of SLAs will likely result in removal from the SLA and arrest

SLAs are not:

- A halfway house/community corrections program or residential treatment program
- A motel housing numerous sex offenders
- For offenders who are not amenable to or not participating in treatment<sup>5</sup>
- For offenders who are not under probation/parole supervision
- An assisted living environment for sex offenders who cannot live on their own based upon developmental disabilities or serious mental illness
- A substitute for a homeless shelter for indigent sex offenders
- An option where local ordinances prohibit certain numbers of sex offenders from residing in the same residence

Demographic Information<sup>6</sup>:

- There are currently approximately 1500 adult sex offenders under community supervision in the state of Colorado (April 2010).
- There are 6 sex offense specific treatment programs that currently provide SLAs

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<sup>3</sup> Correlated with successful participation in treatment and community supervision. Stable housing and social support relationships contribute to reduced sexual recidivism and general criminality

<sup>4</sup> Having someone significant to the offender and/or a roommate who attends treatment with the offender, has a positive relationship with the supervising officer and treatment provider, and is well versed in the offender's supervision and treatment requirements.

<sup>5</sup> Severe denial or psychopathy

<sup>6</sup> The Office of Sex Offender Management, which staffs the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board obtained the demographic information from approved treatment providers in March 2010.

- There are currently 127 sex offenders residing in 57 SLAs in Colorado, which represents about 8.5% of supervised sex offenders in Colorado.
  - 102 offenders in 49 SLAs in Denver
  - 20 offenders in 6 SLAs in Boulder/Longmont
  - 5 offenders in 2 SLAs in Unincorporated Arapahoe County

#### Summary and Recommendation:

SLAs are a viable intervention alternative that research has proven effective for moderate-high risk sex offenders in the community. Studies also demonstrate that SLAs enhance community safety and provide greater accountability for sex offenders. Currently, a number of local jurisdictions have ordinances prohibiting multiple offenders from living in the same residence, thereby outlawing SLAs. This has led to a disproportionate number of SLAs being located in Denver, including those offenders who are coming from other jurisdictions. This places an undue burden on Denver resources, and causes offenders sentenced in one jurisdiction to be supervised in another jurisdiction. It also prevents community supervision teams from managing sex offenders in the most effective fashion in the community. The SOMB recommends reconsideration of these ordinances to allow for the placement of SLAs to improve the sex offender management, registration, and tracking system in Colorado. The SOMB believes that all communities have the responsibility to successfully manage sex offenders living in their community and can increase public safety and provide effective management of sexual offenders through the use of SLAs. Therefore, the SOMB strongly encourages communities to allow the use of SLAs as a sex offender management strategy in their jurisdiction.

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