



## Resident Application Process

### What is Sweetwater Spectrum?

Sweetwater Spectrum is a non-profit with the mission to provide an inclusive residential community that is designed to accommodate the special needs of individuals with various physical/intellectual / developmental disabilities. This community allows residents to live with peers in an environment that encourages independent living, social integration, and personal choice. Sweetwater Spectrum is based on a Supported Living model. Sweetwater Spectrum may provide community-wide enrichment programming occasionally, but we do not provide any direct support or care to residents. The goal is to create a community in which each resident will develop independently, live life with purpose, and adapt to the world given each person's unique ability.

### Sweetwater Spectrum Mission Statement

To provide innovative, community-based, long-term, inclusive residential community that are designed to accommodate the special needs of individuals with various physical/intellectual / developmental disabilities that offers individual choice and challenges each resident to reach highest potential.

### Sweetwater Spectrum Founding Principles

#### **Accommodate the full range of disabilities:**

Sweetwater Spectrum recognizes that no matter what abilities an individual has, they can choose to live in the community. A strong and well-rounded environment will embrace residents with compatible and complementary interests and skills. This diversity will create an environment with opportunities for all residents to find friends and gain greater self-confidence.

#### **Foster active resident involvement in their home, neighborhood, and surrounding communities:**

Sweetwater Spectrum will encourage families, on-site self-selected service providers, city officials, merchants, community volunteers, and neighbors to develop opportunities for meaningful interaction with the residents of Sweetwater Spectrum. The aim is to make all levels of community engagement available to residents.

#### **Provide access to productive enriching choices that support a life with purpose:**

By pooling the resources and space of five homes, Sweetwater Spectrum residents will have access to on-site occasional enrichment activities and amenities such as a pool, hot tubs, exercise room, library/art room, and a community center with a teaching kitchen and a room for gatherings.

#### **Offer the opportunity for long-term residency:**

The vast majority of current housing options are privately owned and run the risk, like any business, of the owner going out of business. Sweetwater Spectrum is a nonprofit corporation with the mission to provide an inclusive housing community and with a Board of Directors charged with that mission which in turn allows Sweetwater Spectrum to exist for years to come. Many parents and

other family members of individuals with disabilities worry about what will happen to their loved ones when the family is no longer around. Sweetwater Spectrum seeks to provide the opportunity to have continuity of housing for a resident as long as possible.\*

\*Successful living at Sweetwater Spectrum long-term requires full compliance with the terms and conditions of the Lease Agreement, including the Community Rules.

**Utilize ADA-specific design, which addresses both safety and sensory issues:**

Sweetwater Spectrum property and grounds were specifically designed with a keen focus on accommodating the unique needs and characteristics of individuals with disabilities. After conducting extensive interviews, focus groups, and research, Sweetwater Spectrum learned that living in a home that is designed to provide special accommodation for the unique needs of individuals with disabilities will enhance their comfort and quality of life for them.

**Nurture long-term, high-value relationships between residents and service staff:**

Our five homes provide a comfortable setting for your chosen direct support staff who help residents learn life skills and pursue new activities. Positive collaboration with everyone who is in contact with Sweetwater Spectrum residents will contribute to a supportive environment for all residents.

**Accommodate residents across a broad financial spectrum:**

As a community that celebrates diversity, Sweetwater Spectrum believes that socioeconomic differences among residents are important. Scholarship opportunities may be available as determined through a statement of need, financial application, and careful analysis of available resources.\*\*

\*\*Periodically, scholarship recipients may be required to provide updated documentation for ongoing review of qualification/requalification.

**Create and foster a model that can be replicated nationwide:**

The Sweetwater Spectrum community model was developed as a solution to the national problem of too few high-quality housing that are specially designed and purposely built to accommodate the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. The commitment to share our knowledge and provide support to advance the replication of Sweetwater Spectrum communities is central to the mission. Our focus on the individual with disabilities and their long-term needs makes this community unique and innovative in the field.

Sweetwater Spectrum – Sonoma

Located four blocks from the active Sonoma town square, residents of Sweetwater Spectrum in Sonoma will have direct access to shops, restaurants, farmer's markets, movie theatre, and many community events. The robust nature of this city will provide recreational and vocational opportunities for residents. The location in the Sonoma Valley, one of the premier tourist destinations in America, encourages town friends and extended family to visit their relatives often while exploring this beautiful region.

Resident Qualifications for Sweetwater Spectrum – Sonoma

In order to qualify for residency at Sweetwater Spectrum, applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Have a preference to live in a community specially designed to accommodate the needs of persons

- with disabilities;
- Have a comprehensive, individualized plan for care in effect, which allows the resident to live communally with appropriate support systems;
  - Have resources (or guarantor) to pay for all costs, including rent and community fees, and personal expenses, including any available scholarship;
  - Not present a health and/or safety risk to themselves or to others;
  - Not have a criminal record;
  - Not have been served any notice by any housing provider for behavior issues;
  - Not have been evicted or requested to move by any housing provider;
  - Have submitted a complete application with all of the necessary supporting documents with full payment of the application fee;
  - Have signed/authorized release of information by care providers to Sweetwater Spectrum;

### Application Process

Vacancy at Sweetwater Spectrum is rare. Interested persons must submit a completed rental application with all supporting documents and pay the application fee. An application will not be reviewed/considered without a site visit/tour that is within 60 days preceding the submission of the application. An application will expire after one (1) month of submission and becomes an indication of interest only. If your application has expired, you may submit updated applications and supporting documents as desired. When a vacancy becomes available, active applications will be reviewed as follows:

#### *I. Site Visit / Tour of Sweetwater Spectrum*

The application will first be reviewed to see if it follows a site visit/tour of Sweetwater Spectrum. Applications with a timely site visit/tour of Sweetwater Spectrum will then undergo a Preliminary Financial Review below. Applications not preceded by a site visit/tour of Sweetwater Spectrum will not be considered and will be retained as an indication of interest but only for statistical purposes.

#### *II. Preliminary Financial Review*

A preliminary review by Sweetwater Spectrum of the financial portion of the application to establish the general financial ability of the resident or any proposed guarantor to pay rent, community fees, and other lease obligations will be conducted. Scholarship application, if available and desired by the applicant, must also be completed and submitted with the rental application. Applications showing sufficient financial ability and those in need of financial assistance, if funds are available, will then proceed to the interview phase below. Incomplete applications will not be considered further or retained as an indication of interest but only for statistical purposes.

#### *III. Interview re Special Needs for Reasonable Accommodation*

An in-person interview with the applicant (including the conservator and family members who desire to participate) will be conducted to determine the scope of any special needs and how Sweetwater Spectrum may accommodate them. The interview may take place at the applicant's current residence or at Sweetwater Spectrum, at the sole discretion of Sweetwater Spectrum.

#### *IV. Secondary Eligibility Review*

Once an applicant has passed the first three (3) phases of the review above, the applicant will additionally be required to undergo a Secondary Eligibility review process during which the

applicant will be directed to contact the applicant's regional center or private care provider to establish a comprehensive, individualized plan for care that will allow the applicant to live communally and comply with the Lease and Community Rules with appropriate support systems. Once received, the comprehensive, individualized plan will be reviewed by Sweetwater Spectrum to determine whether supports and services are in place for the applicant to live communally with appropriate support systems. If Sweetwater Spectrum determines that the plan is deficient for the applicant's individual needs, the applicant will need to work with the service provider to provide a revised plan for consideration.

At the same time, Sweetwater Spectrum will undertake extensive and thorough review and evaluation of the applicant's (including that of the guarantor's) financial resources to determine final financial eligibility. As part of this process, Sweetwater Spectrum may require the applicant (and the guarantor/family) to participate in a review with a financial advisor selected by Sweetwater Spectrum to be completed.

If the applicant does not meet Sweetwater Spectrum's requirements during this phase, then the application will not be considered further and will be retained as an indication of interest and for statistical purposes.

#### *V. Compatibility Review by Housemates*

Because all residents are sharing their homes in groups of four (4) or two (2), existing Housemate(s) (including their conservators and/or families) in the House with the vacancy will review the applicant's application materials and meet with the applicant to determine if it is a good fit for all. Sweetwater Spectrum will facilitate this process but will not have a say or otherwise participate in the determination decision by the Housemates.

#### *VI. Post-Approval Requirements*

Once the applicant has passed the Compatibility Review by Housemates, Sweetwater Spectrum will provide the month-to-month Lease, including the Guarantee, if applicable, to the applicant (and Guarantor, if applicable) which will need to be signed within three (3) days, and a security deposit must be paid at the same time as lease signing. After the Lease has been signed and security deposit has been paid, Sweetwater Spectrum will then prepare a transition plan for the approved applicant's move to into the applicant's new home. The move-in must proceed in accordance with the transition plan.

#### *VII. Non-Compliance*

If an applicant or approved applicant fails to adhere to any part of this process at any time, Sweetwater Spectrum reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw final approval. Should you have any questions regarding this process, please contact Olivia Vain, CEO/Executive Director at Sweetwater Spectrum: 707-996-3104 or [info@sweetwaterspectrum.org](mailto:info@sweetwaterspectrum.org)