



Housing for People with Disabilities Final Report 2009

Introduction

Housing for people with disabilities has been, and continues to be, a significant problem in Minnesota, and the rest of the country. There is not enough accessible, affordable and available housing. The Metro Center for Independent Living, the Minnesota State Council on Disability and Options Too decided to study the problem. In June and July 2009, four focus groups were held around the state: St. Paul, Hibbing, Fergus Falls, and Rochester. About half of the participants were consumers and half were professionals with housing experience. We asked these focus groups to identify issues, other than lack of funding for housing, that impact housing for people with disabilities. They were then to make recommendations on:

- Policy
- Legislative Issues
- Code
- Licensing

A study group reviewed the notes from the focus groups and divided the issues into seven categories:

- Subsidized housing
- Access to housing
- Safety/repair/maintenance
- Human rights
- Services
- Physical access
- Systems

Several recommendations were mentioned more than once:

- Need to reduce complicated paperwork
- Need to upgrade/enforce maintenance of buildings, e.g., pest control, cleanliness
- Need for website with housing information, e.g., accessible housing available, basic information on programs available, housing fees, applications, etc.

Background

Four focus groups were held in June and July 2009: Access North Center for Independent Living (Hibbing), Metro Area (Metro CIL), Fergus Falls (FREEDOM Center for Independent Living) and Rochester (Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living). The purpose of these groups was to identify issues related to housing for people with disabilities, and, specifically beyond the obvious need for more accessible and affordable housing. Focus groups consisted of consumers with disabilities and professionals in the community.

A Study Group reviewed the summaries of the focus group meetings and developed a rough final report. This group divided issues into seven categories:

- + Subsidized housing
- + Access to housing
- + Safety /repair/maintenance
- + Human rights
- + Services
- + Physical access
- + Systems

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

Issue	Recommendation
Waiting lists are too long	
Consumers need information on resources available to them	Housing website with housing information available
Too much paperwork for landlords, making them reluctant to offer subsidized housing for persons with disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplify paperwork requirements 2. Make paperwork standard across agencies
Consumers need adequate notice from owners upon lease renewal	

ACCESS TO HOUSING

Issue	Recommendation
Consumers need basic information on application fees, damage deposits, etc.	Housing website with housing information available
Many consumers cannot afford multiple application fees, which are not refundable	Identify source of funding – possible on-going funding from housing company/builders assn?
Companion/service animals are not allowed in rental housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate landlords 2. Housing website with housing information available
Lack of usability data	
Need for more intergenerational housing	

SAFETY/REPAIR/MAINTENANCE

Issue	Recommendation
Lack of enforcement of housing maintenance standards	Are there housing maintenance standards for subsidized housing? Should some be developed? Can they be enforced?
Pest control	
Safety in building/neighborhood	
Repair of elevators is not timely	

HUMAN RIGHTS

Issue	Recommendation
Intimidation by other renters and management	
Rental/credit/criminal history	Policy change required
Segregation	
Clean units	Are there maintenance standards?
Stigma re: disability, esp. mental illness and behavior issues	

SERVICES

Issue	Recommendation
Services agencies/organizations are in silos	
Need for transitional skills/intervention	Training programs exist
Info re: transitional funding not common knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing website with housing information available 2. Make service providers aware of this funding possibility

PHYSICAL ACCESS

Issue	Recommendation
Need to increase 2% level of accessibility currently required	Code or policy change
Lack of choice	
Landlords define levels of accessibility	Need standard definitions of accessibility
No standard definition of accessibility	Need standard definitions of accessibility
No mandate for elevators in new multistory buildings	Need code change

SYSTEMS

Issue	Recommendation
Accuracy of guidelines	
Transparency between systems/agencies	
Not user friendly/need for simplicity	
Housing designed to fit funding	
Paperwork	
Lack of usable data	
Need to be homeless to get accessible housing	
Need to keep people in communities	

Focus Group Participants:

Nate Aalgaard, Freedom Center for Independent Living, Fargo, ND
 Les Bauer, Parent, Zumbrota
 Anita Beckman, AccessNorth Center for Independent Living, Hibbing
 Tracy Benson, consumer, Burnsville
 Michelle Black, consumer, Rochester
 Maynard Bostrom, consumer, Rochester
 Laurie Brownell, Olmsted County, Rochester
 David Chaikin, consumer, Minneapolis
 Allen Chandler, consumer, Owatonna
 Samantha Flisby, consumer, Rochester
 Mike Fosnot, consumer, Hibbing
 Jode Freyholtz, Region 5 Consumer Survivor Network, Wadena
 Dwight Hart, consumer, Hibbing
 Maureen King, consumer, New York Mills
 Nanci Klocke, CADI, Olmsted County, Rochester
 Steve Korngable, MS Society, Minneapolis
 Jane Lampland, consumer, St. Paul
 Jenny Lewis, AXIS, St. Paul
 Jon Lounberg, consumer, Minneapolis
 Ann Meyer, Ramsey County Survivor Network, St. Paul
 Cynthia Miller, consumer, Perham
 Debbie Monahan, Arc SE MN, Rochester
 Cookie Nelson, Ottertail Wadena CAC, Fergus Falls
 Steve Nelson, St. Louis County Planning & Development, Virginia
 Pam Parson, AccessNorth Center for Independent Living, Hibbing
 Dale Rolle, Family & Community Services, Moorhead
 Gene Rossum, grandparent, Brandon
 Susan Schatz, Thomas Allen, W. St. Paul
 Barbara Schifano, Metro Center for Independent Living, St. Paul
 Hulet Sherry, consumer, Rochester
 Susan Shimota, PACER & parent, Minneapolis

Becky Waldera, Freedom Center for Independent Living, Fargo, ND
David Wykoff, consumer, Rochester

Study Group:

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Barbara Schifano, Metro Center for Independent Living, St. Paul
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Diane Sprague, Lifetime Home Project, Minneapolis

Facilitators:

Margot Imdieke Cross, MN Council for Disability, St. Paul
Ann Roscoe, Options Too and Metro Center for Independent Living, St. Paul