

**KING COUNTY
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
DIVISION**

**Housing and Support Services Plan for
Adults with Developmental Disabilities**

**Approved by the
King County Board for Developmental Disabilities
June 7, 2000**

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King County Developmental Disabilities Division Housing and Support Services Plan

Introduction

The King County Developmental Disabilities Division (KCDDD) recognizes the critical role of affordable housing in the lives of adults with developmental disabilities. In an effort to determine the extent of the affordable housing crisis in King County for persons with developmental disabilities, KCDDD and the King County Board for Developmental Disabilities (the Board) sponsored a needs assessment in 1998¹. The needs assessment identified many issues which affect the availability of housing and support services. The most significant are as follows:

- Aging of adults and their family caregivers;
- Costs of renting and purchasing housing;
- Lack of service funds to support people in housing;
- Insufficient incentives to create long-term affordable housing;
- Access to the limited number of Section 8 housing subsidies;
- Adult Family Home licensing requirements and payment schedules;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) regulations on income generation;
- Inflexibility in use of Medicaid Personal Care dollars.

In an effort to address some of the critical issues identified in the needs assessment, the Board approved the development of a comprehensive housing and support services plan.

Purpose of Plan

The purpose of this Housing and Support Services Plan is to identify the strategies and actions that will be taken by KCDDD to increase the affordable housing opportunities and support services for adults with developmental disabilities in King County. Although the provision of housing and support services are not required, KCDDD recognizes the importance of supporting efforts to increase affordable housing opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. This plan details how KCDDD will respond to the current affordable housing crisis.

Summary of the Planning Process

A Board housing work group was convened to assist KCDDD with the development of recommendations on strategies and action steps to expand housing options for adults with developmental disabilities. The work group was comprised of KCDDD staff, Board members, parents, advocates, consumers, providers, and staff from the State Region 4 Division of Developmental Disabilities (Region 4 DDD) and the King County Housing Finance Program. Draft recommendations from the work group were presented at the monthly Board meetings and input was solicited from community members and other stakeholders.

¹ The needs assessment was prepared by Common Ground and AND Research.

Planning Principles

KCDDD recognizes the need for adults with developmental disabilities to live in safe, stable, and affordable housing of their choice. It is important to emphasize the strong link between housing and support services for most adults with developmental disabilities. Support services are crucial in assisting individuals to be able to live safely and independently, as well as maintain their housing.

The housing and support services plan is in alignment with KCDDD's mission statement, which is:

To assist King County residents of all ages and cultures who have developmental disabilities to achieve full, active, integrated and productive participation in community life.

In addition, the following benefits of quality living from the State Division of Developmental Disabilities County Guidelines were used as guiding principles in the development of the strategy recommendations:

- Power and Choice – Making our own choices and directing our own lives.
- Relationships – Having people in our lives whom we love and care about and who love and care about us.
- Status/Contribution – Feeling good about ourselves and having others recognize us for what we contribute to others and our community.
- Integration – Being a part of our community, through active involvement.
- Competence – Learning to do things on our own or be supported to do things for ourselves.
- Health and Safety – Feeling safe and secure, and being healthy.

Strategy Recommendations

The strategies recommended in this document fall into three categories: A) Information and Technical Assistance Strategies to Access Housing and Support Services; B) Advocacy; and C) Collaboration/Partnerships to Increase Available, Affordable Housing Opportunities and Support Services. Under each strategy, recommended action steps are listed. A more detailed workplan will be developed for each strategy as it moves into an implementation stage.

A) Information and Technical Assistance Strategies to Access Housing and Support Services

Three areas were identified for focused efforts. The first is associated with providing information and technical assistance on accessing housing and support services. The second area is directed towards increasing public awareness and education regarding housing options and support services. The third area relates to long-term planning and family investment.

Strategy #1 - Provide Information and Technical Assistance on Developing and Accessing Housing and Support Services

The need for centralized information regarding housing options and resources for adults with a developmental disability was a theme heard throughout the planning process. There are numerous systems and organizations, which provide different types of housing resources. These resources include the following: capital funding and technical assistance to build affordable housing, subsidized housing, housing repair, and residential and support services. A great deal of information is available regarding housing options and resources; however, this information is fragmented and spread out among the various housing systems and organizations. Currently, there is no central agency in King County that provides comprehensive information on housing options and resources for adults with developmental disabilities.

Information on a full range of housing options and resources is needed by individuals, families, caregivers and case managers in order to determine the best way for adults with developmental disabilities to live independently in their communities. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD's primary role in the area of housing for adults with developmental disabilities is to provide information and technical assistance.

Recommended Action:

Establish a Housing and Support Services Resources Coordinator

The housing work group recommends that KCDDD's highest priority is to establish a housing and support services resources coordinator to serve as a central source of information regarding housing options and resources. During the County budget process for 2001, KCDDD will consult with Region 4 DDD and the Department of Community and Human Services administration to further evaluate the most cost effective and efficient means to provide this function. The coordinator will be responsible for activities that will include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Collect and maintain housing and support services resource information.
2. Develop and maintain a web-site, which will provide technical assistance and information on housing options and resources.
3. Provide information and technical assistance to individuals, families, caregivers and case managers on many aspects of developing and accessing housing and support services.
4. Link those individuals who need housing with affordable units in their community.
5. Coordinate the County's efforts to expand housing options and support services for adults with developmental disabilities.

Strategy #2 – Increase Public Awareness and Education on Housing Options and Support Services

Adults with developmental disabilities have varying levels of support needs and financial resources. There is no single housing option or model that will fit everyone. Housing and support solutions must be tailored to each individual. The

housing work group recommends that KCDDD increase public awareness and education on housing options and support services to assist individuals, families, caregivers and case managers in making housing decisions.

Recommended Actions:

1. Collaborate with Region 4 DDD and sponsor a housing and support services conference.

It is important to make housing and support services information available to individuals, families, caregivers and case managers to assist with the process of making informed housing decisions. Families who have created housing options and support services for their children are an important resource and many individuals and other families would benefit from learning about their experiences. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD collaborate with Region 4 DDD and sponsor a housing and support services conference where information on a wide range of housing options and resources will be presented.

2. Develop follow-up training and explore the feasibility of continuing the training or education.

To maximize the effectiveness of the housing and support services conference, the housing work group recommends that follow-up training be provided as the next step to assist individuals in accessing their desired housing option.

Strategy #3 - Promote Long-Term Planning and Family Investment

According to the King County Housing Needs Assessment for Adults with Developmental Disabilities, 3,408 adults in King County were enrolled in the State DDD system in 1998. This number represents approximately one half of the people estimated in King County to have a developmental disability². Of those adults who received services from the State, 1,395 (37%) were living with their parents or other relatives. This number has increased to 1,494, as of May 1, 2000³. When asked, most adults with developmental disabilities would prefer to live independently in community settings, which include apartments, condominiums, or single family homes. It is essential that families begin long-term planning as early as possible to determine the types of housing and support services that are desired and the actions that need to be taken to achieve these goals. The housing work group and KCDDD want to encourage and support families to plan for the future housing and support services needs of their family members with developmental disabilities.

Recommended Actions:

1. Explore the feasibility of developing resource guides for adults with developmental disabilities, families, caregivers, and the community on steps to take to find and/or fund housing and support services.

² King County Housing Needs Assessment for Adults with Developmental Disabilities, pages 2-3.

³ Interview, Joe Carter, State Region 4 DDD

Many publications and guides have been developed which provide a wide variety of information such as resources, action steps, and issues to consider as different housing options and support services are explored. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD determine the feasibility of developing resource guides on finding and/or funding housing options and support services in King County for adults with developmental disabilities, families, caregivers and the community.

2. Collaborate with Washington State Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development on providing information and training on the Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund.

In 1999, legislation was passed to establish an endowment trust fund to support individuals with developmental disabilities through private contributions and public funds. This fund was set up to encourage and assist families with long-range financial planning. Staff and administrative support for the fund is being provided by the Washington State Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development (DCTED). The housing work group recommends that KCDDD collaborate with DCTED on providing information and training to individuals with developmental disabilities, families, and caregivers regarding the Developmental Disabilities Endowment Trust Fund.

B) Advocacy

Advocates within the developmental disabilities community play a crucial role in raising awareness of the housing and support services needs of adults with developmental disabilities and ensuring that available housing funding is used to meet these needs. The housing work group recognizes the valuable role of the advocates and recommends that KCDDD continue to support their efforts.

Strategy - Continue the Work of the King County Board for Developmental Disabilities on Policy, Funding, and Advocacy Actions Related to Housing and Support Services

Adults with developmental disabilities are faced with many housing and support services issues and much work is needed to address these issues. The housing work group recommends that the King County Board for Developmental Disabilities (the Board) continue its involvement in the areas related to housing and support services.

Recommended Actions:

1. Add a Housing and Support Services Committee to the Board committee structure.

Currently, the Board has five standing committees: 1) Executive, 2) Employment, 3) Support Services, 4) Legislative, and 5) Recruitment and Nominating. The housing work group recommends that the Board add a Housing and Support Services Committee to increase focus on policy, funding, and advocacy actions related to housing and support services.

2. Maintain housing and support services as a priority in the Board’s legislative agenda.

The Board and the King County Parent Coalition for Developmental Disabilities sponsor an annual legislative forum to increase awareness of the legislative needs of the developmental disabilities community. State legislators representing King County are invited to meet with individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and service providers to hear their concerns and legislative needs. Board recommendations include advocating for the Legislature to achieve the following:

- Allocate operating funds for organizations that develop affordable housing for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Continue to allocate funds to assist older families, whose children with developmental disabilities would not otherwise be able to move out of their family’s home.

The housing work group recommends that housing and support services continue to be a priority on the Board’s legislative agenda.

C) Collaboration/Partnerships to Increase Available, Affordable Housing Opportunities and Support Services

Building on existing partnerships and developing new relationships with the affordable housing community is critical to ensure that the housing and support services needs of adults with developmental disabilities are addressed.

Strategy - Develop partnerships and collaborate with organizations to increase housing opportunities and support services for adults with developmental disabilities

Numerous agencies and organizations are responsible for the development, planning, and administration of housing and related service programs. More coordination of information and resources is needed to reduce the duplication of efforts and to improve ways of providing services to individuals. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD continue to collaborate with organizations and develop new partnerships to coordinate efforts and increase housing opportunities and support services for adults with developmental disabilities.

Recommended Actions:

1. Continue the efforts to increase access to Section 8 vouchers, certificates, and units for people with disabilities.

The collaboration among King County, Region 4 DDD, local housing authorities and cities has resulted in the expansion of housing opportunities for people with disabilities. The housing work group recommends the continuation of this partnership to increase utilization of existing housing resources.

2. Expand partnerships with private and non-profit developers of affordable housing.

KCDDD has developed linkages with key players in the affordable housing arena. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD continue to expand partnerships to increase housing opportunities and support services for adults with developmental disabilities.

3. Collaborate with the King County Consortium to explore the feasibility of using a portion of HOME funds for tenant-based rental assistance.

According to the Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan for 2000-2003, the King County Consortium will explore the feasibility of using a portion of HOME funds for tenant-based rental assistance. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD collaborate with the Consortium in this effort.

4. Collaborate with Region 4 DDD to explore the feasibility of one or more public entities providing operating support for affordable housing.

The lack of operating funds for affordable housing has been a major barrier for non-profit organizations to develop housing for people with disabilities. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD collaborate with Region 4 DDD to explore and promote acceptable alternatives to provide operating support for affordable housing.

Additional Possible Action Items:

Throughout the planning process, the Board housing work group had many discussions regarding possible actions that could be undertaken by KCDDD. The above strategies and action items were designated as priorities. The following action items require further analysis and may be pursued at a later time:

1. Explore the feasibility of adding housing for homeless people with a developmental disability as an additional priority for use of Shelter Plus Care allocations.

The federally funded Shelter Plus Care Program provides rental assistance for homeless persons with disabilities. Currently, priorities are focused on mental health, chemical dependency, AIDS or AIDS related illness populations. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD explore the feasibility of accessing this federal funding for homeless adults with developmental disabilities.

2. Explore the feasibility of seeding the development of a foundation to promote the goals of creating and maintaining affordable housing for adults with a developmental disability.

A mechanism to enable non-profit organizations to receive housing donated by families and other individuals would utilize existing housing resources and increase housing stock. This mechanism would also provide a way to access private, philanthropic resources. The housing work group recommends that KCDDD explore the feasibility of seeding the development of a foundation to promote the goals of creating and maintaining affordable housing for adults with a developmental disability.

Conclusion

KCDDD and the Board are committed to encouraging and supporting efforts to increase affordable housing opportunities and support services for adults with developmental disabilities. This plan outlines the priority strategies and action items that will be implemented over the next several months.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Acknowledgments

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Pam Blanton	King County Housing Finance Program
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APPENDIX B

Summary of Public Comments

The draft Housing Plan was available for public comment beginning on May 3, 2000.

Comments on the Plan:

- Concerns were raised that the critical relationship between housing and support services was not emphasized enough in the draft Plan. Requests were made to use the words “housing and support services” throughout the document. The Plan was amended to reflect these text changes.
- A request was made to clarify the term “information services”, which is one of the services that will be provided by the Housing Resources Coordinator. This change was made in the Plan.
- A concern was raised that under Strategy #2, the words “train the trainer model” stated in Recommended Action #2 were unclear and may raise questions regarding the intent of the action item. A request was made to change the wording of this action item to read as follows: Develop follow-up training and explore the feasibility of continuing the training or education. This change was made in the Plan.
- A concern was raised that the number of individuals living with their parents or relatives is much higher than the number listed in the Plan. The number of individuals living with their parents or relatives that was listed in the Plan represents only adults (over the age of 18) who received residential services from the State.
- The following strategies were suggested for the Board to consider:
 - Develop a computer-based program for helping families and individuals find compatible roommates for both rental or homeownership options.
 - Establish more direct connections on the housing side with groups like potential tax credit developers, professional associations of landlords, realtors, nonprofit housers, and real estate and tax attorneys.
 - Work in collaboration with DDD Region 4 to develop acceptable models for single adults to live in shared community housing.
 - Advocate aggressively with local jurisdictions within King County to eliminate formal and informal policies that discriminate against people with disabilities.
 - Provide seed money to private nonprofit organizations and ventures who bring specific proposals that address the needs identified in the 1998 Needs Assessment, and are consistent with the strategies adopted in this Plan.
- A concern was raised that there is no specific commitment of resources to address any of the action items in the Plan. A suggestion was made to dedicate County resources to seed collaboration and ensure the accomplishment of the action items. During the 2001 budget process, KCDDD will determine the amount of funding needed to implement the Plan and allocate County resources accordingly.

APPENDIX C

Glossary of Terms

Access Housing – Obtain desired housing option.

Affordable Housing – No more than 30% of a person's income is used for housing costs (rent/mortgage and utilities).

HOME Funds – Federal funding which is used to create affordable permanent housing for low and very-low income residents.

Housing Opportunities/Options – A wide range of housing choices, which includes home ownership, renting, cooperative living arrangements, and developing housing.

King County Consortium – Represents 35 cities and towns and the unincorporated areas of King County, outside the City of Seattle.

Operating Funds – Funds needed to cover routine repair and maintenance costs of housing. Examples include: utility costs, repair costs, insurance costs.

Residential Services – These services are provided to persons who require assistance with daily living and do not live at home. Region 4 DDD contracts for these services with organizations or individuals that provide varying levels of assistance. Services include both facility based and non-facility-based programs.

Section 8 – A federal program operated by local housing authorities providing rental assistance to low-income persons. The Section 8 *certificate* program typically includes a maximum rent for a metropolitan area or county. Individuals receiving assistance under a certificate program must find a unit that complies with rent guidelines and will pay 30% of their income for rent. Under the Section 8 *voucher* program, the local housing authority determines a standard amount of rental assistance an individual or family will receive. The tenant would pay the difference between the amount of assistance and the actual rent, which may require the tenant to spend more than 30% of their income on rent.

Support Services – Services provided for the purpose of facilitating the independence of adults with developmental disabilities. Examples include: personal care, case management, transportation, supported employment.

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance – A form of rental assistance in which the assisted tenant may move from a dwelling unit with a right to continued assistance.

(Definitions compiled from various sources including the King County Housing Needs Assessment for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and the 1999 Report on AIDS Housing in Seattle-King County.)