

Beyond Group Homes

Housing Options for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Part of Vision for Equality's
Creative Community Living Options Series

Presented by David Gates, Esq.
Pa Health Law Project

www.phlp.org

Amber Borreli, Ph.D.

Values Into Action

<https://valuesintoaction.org/pa/>

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Developing a Housing Plan

- Before you start looking for a home or apartment, determine what's important to the participant and what their needs are in order to develop a housing plan
- Can get help with housing planning from an agency enrolled as a “Housing Transition/Tenancy Sustaining” waiver service provider
 - Not yet available in every county- ask supports coordinator for names
 - While it's funded under the waiver, the costs are counted towards the budget cap for participants with the Community Living and PFDS waivers so participants who are already at their cap for other services may not be able to use this service without reducing some other service- not a problem for those on the Consolidated waiver

Plan development- Identify important to & for participant in housing

- Start with “Important to Individual” under Individual Preferences in participant’s ISP
- Review “What makes sense” and “Health and Safety” in participant’s ISP
- Identify personal safety concerns including fire safety and wandering
- Emergency back-up plan
- Crisis plan

Plan development- Location considerations- Proximity to:

- **pool of DSPs and other direct service workers**
- **public transportation for participant and for potential staff**
- **family & other natural supports**
- **employment and volunteer opportunities**
- **medical professionals used by participant**
- **food markets and other retail stores**
- **House of Worship attended by participant**
- **community activities of interest to participant**

Plan development- Other considerations

- **Setting desired by participant- urban, suburban, rural?**
- **Physical and sensory accessibility needs**
- **Communication needs**
- **AT and remote supports needs**
- **Medical supports**
- **Behavioral supports**

Planning Resource Material

- Values Into Action Housing Toolkit
- Life Course Tools-
 - <https://www.myodp.org/course/view.php?id=1173>
 - <https://www.visionforequality.org/programs/pa-family-network/>
- PATH & MAPS:
 - <https://inclusion.com/path-maps-and-person-centered-planning/>
 - <https://inclusive-solutions.com/person-centred-planning/maps/>
 - https://ohioemploymentfirst.org/up_doc/What_is_PATH_Strategic_Planning.pdf
 - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQ9IqZXp0IK2YMy5uF77x-cSgfl-AbbyO>

Planning Resource Material continued

- **Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) “A Home of My Own- Preparing for Independence”**
 - <https://www.studymoney.us/activity/activity-16-preparing-for-independence/>
 - also available at PATF Cents & Sensibility: A Guide to Money Management <https://patf.us/cents-and-sensibility-a-guide-to-money-management-508-compliant-pdf/> (in particular Chapter 7)
- **Housing and Services Resource Center of US Health and Human Services (HHS) & Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** <https://acl.gov/HousingAndServices>

Housing Transition/Tenancy Sustaining Service

- **Is Not....**
 - **Emergency Housing Support**
 - **Real Estate Services**
 - **Legal Aid**
- **Is....**
 - **Transitional Support Service**
 - **Direct Service to build skills and plan for support needs**
 - **working with the participant and their team to identify**
 - **participant's housing choices**
 - **what is needed to obtain and maintain that housing**
 - **working with the participant and their team to reach the identified housing outcomes**

Role of HTTS service, continued:

- **Other services and supports**
 - **HTTS provider's role:**
 - develop linkages to those services and supports
 - offering participants, a package of services also provided by the HTTS agency
 - Achieva's "A Home of my Own"
- **However, providers cannot require participants to use other services from that provider as a condition of receiving HTTS**
- **Providers cannot provide HTTS and supports broker services to the same participant**

Role of HTTS provider has 4 primary components:

- Conduct a tenant screening and **housing assessment** that identifies the participant's preferences and barriers related to successful tenancy
- Develop an **individualized housing support plan** based upon the housing assessment
- Assist with and/or **identify resources** needed to implement the housing support plan
- Assist participant in **maintaining housing** after it is obtained

How roles are accomplished

- **planning**
- **resource identification and**
- **fostering relationships with people and entities important to meeting identified outcomes**
 - **supports coordinator**
 - **AE**
 - **other service providers and**
 - **the individual's natural supports**

Housing Models to Consider

- **Once you've determined what's important to the participant related to housing and the other considerations listed previously, it's time to consider how various housing models might meet the participant's wishes and needs**
- **The following slides discuss some of those housing models**

Life Sharing in Family's Home

- Waiver participant moves in with family member(s)
- Waiver participant chooses a Life Sharing provider
- Family member who owns or rents home/apartment that participant will move into signs up with Life Sharing provider as “host family” (can be just one family member)
- Family member(s) provides supports, typically evenings and overnights, including meals in return for which they get a tax free stipend

Life Sharing in Family's Home- 2

- “Host family” family member(s) can also have a day job
- Life Sharing provider arranges day supports for participant
- The family member uses their stipend along with their earnings from day job to pay their rent/mortgage
- Consider this model where participant has an adult sibling or other relative living in PA with whom they get along

Family Life Sharing- 3

- **While the “host family” does not need to be a family member, if the host family is one of the following family members, the home does not need to be licensed:**
 - **parent, child, stepparent, stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew**
- **Provider agency must develop a pre-service agreement with relatives that states the Life Sharing program requirements that the relative(s) must comply with to be a host family**

Family Life Sharing- 4

- **Parents can be the “host family” for their child**
- **Parents of child under 18 can serve as host family if the child needs “extraordinary care”**
 - **“support [that] goes beyond what would be expected to be performed in the usual course of parenting, and when needed support exceeds what is typically required for a child of the same age”**
 - **However, services that would otherwise be covered by MA for youth under 21 cannot be included under Life Sharing**

Life Sharing in Participant's Home

- Life Sharing can be used to provide both overnight supports and some additional money the waiver participant can use towards their rent/mortgage
- The participant rents an apartment or gets a house
 - Will need to figure out security deposit or down payment- may come from Special needs trust or ABLE account
- Participant rents or subleases a room in their home or apartment to someone who is not a family member and for whom this will be their primary residence- called “host family”

Life Sharing in Participant's Home- 2

- The host family can work during the day and get the tax free stipend, they should have enough \$ to pay rent
- Participant can charge rent to “host family” which the participant uses towards paying their rent/mortgage
- Host family also responsible for providing some supports, typically evening meal and overnights

Life Sharing- Who Can Do This

- **The individual must be on either the Consolidated or Community Living waiver**
- **If on the Community Living waiver, must be categorized (based on the SIS) as a Needs Group 1 or 2. People on Community Living in Needs Groups 3 or 4 cannot qualify**
- **Have an agency that is enrolled to provide this service and is willing to accept the participant**
- **Must have Life Sharing added to the individual's ISP and approved by the county (AE)**

Services lost when using Life Sharing

- In home and community supports
- companion
- behavior supports (are to be provided by the Life Sharing provider)
- transportation (except to a job)
- Homemaker/Chore;
- Music, Art & Equine Assisted Therapy;
- Specialized Supplies;
- Family/Caregiver Training and Support
- Consultative Nutritional Services

Supported Living

- **Provided in “private home owned, leased or rented by the participant or provided for the participant’s use via a Special or Supplemental Needs trust”- no \$ for housing**
- **Provides 24/7 on-call (not necessarily in-person) supports**
- **Usually includes some form of remote monitoring**
- **Can also have Community Participation Supports (day program)**
- **Is in place of Respite; Companion; Homemaker/Chore; In-Home and Community Supports; Behavioral Supports (to be provided by Supported Living provider); Therapies; Shift Nursing; Music, Art and Equine Assisted Therapy; Consultative Nutritional Services; Communication Specialist and Specialized Supplies**

Supported Living Who Can Do This

- **The individual must be on either the Consolidated or Community Living waiver**
- **If on the Community Living waiver, must be categorized (based on the SIS) as a Needs Group 1 or 2. People on Community Living in Needs Groups 3 or 4 cannot qualify**
- **Have an agency that is enrolled to provide this service and is willing to accept the participant**
- **Must have Supported Living added to the individual's ISP and approved by the county (AE)**

Non-residential service model

- Possible to get services overnight if needed without going into a group home or using Life Sharing or Supported Living- provided participant has Consolidated waiver
- Pros- only model available to people on PFDS waiver or Community Living Needs Group 3 or 4; not limited to a single provider for most services- can chose different providers for different services; Can self direct (hire your own staff) some services including in home and community supports, companion and employment supports and get help from supports broker
- Cons-
 - No \$ for housing from waiver
 - Overnight coverage not guaranteed- must get approval from ODP

Getting approval for overnights

- If you don't live in a group home or use Life Sharing or Supported Living, must get approval from ODP if participant needs more than **14 hours per day** of In-Home and Community Support, Companion and/or Community Participation Support (combined)
- To get approval, participant must have documented physical health, mental health and/or behavioral needs that require more than **14 hours per day**
- Request is made by supports coordinator using “variance” form
- Request is reviewed by County (AE) then ODP makes decision
- Companion is what is usually approved

Live-ins

- **Because Companion service is what's most commonly approved for overnights and Companion is the lowest paying service, some families have considered providing free room as an enticement to get overnight staff at the Companion rate**
- **Problem: “Caregivers with whom the participant lives may not provide Companion services when the participant has been sleeping 5 or more hours and does not require direct care or supervision during those asleep hours.”**
- **To avoid that prohibition, use sleep logs to document need for “direct care or supervision during those asleep hours” and note that in ISP**

Consideration of other Housing models

- **Rental vs home ownership (including limited equity homeownership)**
- **Co-tenancy & joint ownership**
- **Condos & co-ops (including homeowners and community associations)**
- **Units built on or next to existing houses e.g. Echo homes**
- **Manufactured housing**

Consider Homeownership

- Homeownership can provide greater housing stability than rental
- People with ID or autism can own property, either alone or with another, if they have the intellectual capacity to understand (with explanation) the terms of an agreement of sale and/or mortgage
- Owning a house or condo will not affect a person's eligibility for waiver services or other benefits, so long as it is the person's primary residence
- HTTS providers can explain pros & cons of homeownership and help identify needed resources but should not advise on the legalities of sales agreements or mortgages

Resources

- **Housing Options for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ODP, BAS April 2010** <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Documents/Autism%20Services/Housing%20Options%20for%20Adults%20with%20Autism%20Spectrum%20Disorder.pdf>
- **Report on Non-Traditional Housing Options, Intergovernmental Council on Long Term Care- click link on page below:**
<https://www.aging.pa.gov/organization/PennsylvaniaLongTermCareCouncil/Pages/Related%20Reports%20and%20Studies.aspx>
- **Housing Toolkit & Manual**

Funding Sources for Housing

Consider Subsidized housing

- **Subsidized housing ensures long term affordability. However, there are long waiting lists and available units may not be in locations that meet the participant's needs. Types of subsidized housing include:**
- **Apartments in buildings operated by local Public Housing Authority (“PHA”)**
- **Housing vouchers that belong to the participant which subsidize rents in private apartments if landlord accepts the voucher**
- **Subsidized apartments in buildings that received certain federal or state funding**
- **See handout- Subsidized Housing Programs- A Summary**

Housing choice vouchers (“Section 8”)

- Application is made at the local Public Housing Authority.
 - List found at:
<https://www.hud.gov/states/pennsylvania/renting/hawebsites>
- Applicants will need to supply documents to verify their identity, citizenship/immigration status and income. HTTS providers should assist applicants in obtaining required documents.
- Most PHAs have long waiting lists for housing choice vouchers and may not even be taking applications
 - <https://affordablehousingonline.com/public-housing-waiting-lists/Pennsylvania> to check wait list status or look on PHA’s web site

Housing choice vouchers (“Section 8”), continued

- With a voucher, the tenant pays 30% of their income towards the rent while the PHA pays the rest- up to a maximum set by HUD on a regional basis.
- If a landlord accepts a tenant with a voucher, the landlord cannot charge more than the maximum rent set by HUD. People who obtain a voucher must find a private landlord who will accept a rental amount that does not exceed the HUD-set maximum. Given the rise in rents, this has become increasingly difficult.
- However, if family can afford to buy a house, they can rent to a family member with a disability who had a voucher then use the rent to offset their mortgage.

Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program

- For people with disabilities who meet low-income guidelines:
 - Without permanent supportive housing & at risk of institutionalization; or
 - living in a congregate settings and desire to move to the community
- Resource for 811 generally:
<https://www.phfa.org/mhp/section811pra/>
- Provider agencies can become “Stakeholders” to take applications- contact samantha.vollrath@inglis.org
- Applications can also be made through “Local Lead Agencies”
Resource: https://www.phfa.org/forms/local_lead_agencies/dhs-local-lead-agencies.pdf

Subsidized units in other apartment buildings

- Apartment buildings for seniors and people with disabilities operated by religious organizations or other non-profits (usually HUD Section 202 projects)
- Subsidized units in building funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)
 - Guide to renting a LIHTC Home: <https://www.rhls.org/2022/03/renting-a-lihtc-home-everything-you-need-to-know/>
- Use <https://www.pahousingsearch.com/> to search for those units.
- See handout: “Subsidized Housing Programs” for more information
- See also: <https://affordablehousingonline.com/guide>

Determine costs of private housing

- Remember, the waivers do not provide any funding for housing costs for individuals eligible for HTTS services
- Initial costs: security deposit or mortgage down payment, utility down payments, moving costs, furniture
- Ongoing costs: rent/mortgage, utilities, maintenance, food, property/renters insurance

Financial resources- ABLÉ accounts

- **Great flexibility & low administrative fees**
- **Funds can be used for wide variety of purposes including some ongoing expenses like rent/mortgage, utilities, repairs, taxes**
 - For people on SSI , \$ withdrawn from an ABLÉ account for housing expenses must be spent in the same month they were withdrawn or the individual's SSI may be reduced
- **Contributions currently capped at \$16,000 a year (higher if participant is employed)**
- **Participant must have a disability that occurred before age 26**
- **Resource: <https://PaABLE.gov/>**

Financial resources- Special Needs Trusts

- Overview: <https://www.achieva.info/family-trust/special-needs-trusts-101>
- Unlike ABLE accounts, cannot be used for ongoing living expenses like rent although can be used for 1 time housing related expenses like mortgage down payments or home repairs
- No cap on amount that can be put into trust
- However, there are administrative costs- usually higher than charged for ABLE accounts
- Should be set up by an attorney
 - <https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/> is just one resource for finding attorneys who specialize in setting up special needs trusts

Pooled Trusts

- Contact non-profit pooled trust organization or attorney experienced in drafting special needs trusts drafted by attorney
- Resource: Achieva Family Trust summary of types of trusts
- Non-profit Pooled trusts: Achieva Family Trust
<http://achievafamilytrust.org/>
- Ardent Community Trust of PA (formerly ARC Community Trust)
<https://actpa.org/>
- Comparison of ABLE accounts & Special Needs Trusts- PATF's summary
<https://patf.us/who-we-are/publications/able-vs-snt/> &
<https://www.studymoney.us/activity/ways-to-save-money-and-not-lose-benefits/>

Employment- another financial resource

- **Consider competitive integrated employment to increase financial resources**
- **OVR & waiver funded employment supports are Resources**
- **These rarely affect waiver eligibility but may affect SSI & SNAP**
- **Suggest Benefits counseling by agencies funded by Social Security to provide benefits counseling (Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPAs))- call 1-866-968-7842**
- **If benefits counseling through a WIPA isn't available, can request benefits counselors (CWICs) through the waiver**

Other financial resources

- **Contributions from family**
 - Be careful as these can affect SSI payment rate and eligibility for waiver and Medical Assistance.
 - Also not a reliable long-term source of funding for housing costs
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

Consideration of Shared housing (housemates)

- **Personal choice- Provider cannot insist participant seek a housemate but some participants may not want to live alone**
- **For some participants, sharing housing with another may be financially necessary in order to obtain the type of housing in the location sought by the participant**
- **Obtaining preferred characteristics of room/housemate from supported individual (one page profile and/or matching tool or in assessment)**
- **Consider shared interests, availability, characteristics and financial ability before disability**

Shared housing, continued

- **Assessing characteristics of supported individual that may present challenges for potential room/housemates.**
- **Resources for finding potential room/housemates**
- **If housemate is also on waiver, then consider coordination of services of both individuals**
- **Communicating with your room/housemate**
- **HTTS provider works as part of the team to assist with finding the best possible housemate(s) and helping to develop written/share agreements for changing or ending relationship**

Funding for Homeownership

- **Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) Mortgages:**
 - PHFA offers many mortgages that have lower down payment requirements, lower costs and competitive interest rates. See <https://www.phfa.org/homebuyers/> to get started.
 - In addition, home buyers with a disability or a disabled household member, who are eligible for any of the PHFA mortgages, may also be eligible to receive up to \$15,000 in a no interest loan to make accessibility modifications to their home
 - Those home buyers may also be eligible for a no interest loan of up to \$15,000 for downpayment and closing costs
 - See <https://phfa.org/programs/assistance.aspx> for more information

HUD Homeownership Voucher Program

- HUD offers a homeownership program for holders of Housing Choice Vouchers (see previous slide)
- This program is not available in all areas. Check with your local housing authority to see if they offer this program.
- https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/homeownership
- Information about the Philadelphia Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program can be found at <http://www.pha.phila.gov/resident-services/homeownership/housing-choice-homeownership.aspx>

More Funding for Homeownership

- **FHA insured mortgage:** If you have good credit and some money for a down payment, you may qualify for an FHA-insured mortgage, which requires a lower down payment than most conventional mortgages. You can also finance your closing costs and fees into the mortgage.
 - See <https://www.hud.gov/buying/loans> for more information
- **HUD's 203(k) program:** If the house you are buying needs repairs, you can apply under this program to finance the purchase and repairs on the home.
 - For more information, see https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/sfh/203k/203k-df

More Funding for Homeownership continued

- **USDA:** the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers homeownership assistance programs for residents of non-urban areas. To see if your area qualifies for USDA assistance, see <https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do?pageAction=sfpd> To determine eligibility, start here: <https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do>
- **Veterans Administration:** If you or a family member are a veteran, you may qualify a loan through the federal Veterans Administration, which often requires no down payment and has lower closing costs.
 - <https://www.phfa.org/programs/repairs.aspx>

Review Credit

- Good credit is critical to obtain most private apartments and mortgages
- People with disabilities who haven't purchased anything on credit usually have no credit. They will need to create a credit history.
- People with poor credit will need to take action to improve their credit and may need a cosigner for housing.
- Resource: PATF Cents and Sensibility: A Guide to Money Management, 6th edition, Chapter 6 (Borrowing Money) downloadable pdf <https://patf.us/what-we-do/financial-education/>
- <https://www.studymoney.us/activity/credit-overview/>
 - Interactive worksheets on the StudyMoney.us website- include auto- calculations

Develop a budget & assess affordability

- Important to assist participant to determine and understand their financial reality for housing purposes and to prioritize expenses
- Work sheets: Money Mapping portion of Financial education curriculum- PATF's <https://www.studymoney.us/> & Cents and Sensibility, <https://patf.us/what-we-do/financial-education/> and PREP materials
- Remember, the waivers do not provide any funding for housing costs for individuals eligible for HTTS services

Home accessibility modifications

- **While Public Housing Authorities and the 811 Project Rental Assistance Program must have accessible units, private housing usually does not so accessibility will often be the responsibility of the tenant or homeowner. In those situations, the HTTS provider should offer resources for the identification of needed accessibility modifications and sources of funding of them**

Identification of need and type of accessibility modifications

- Contact supports coordinator for list of enrolled providers of Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. For certified Assistive Technology Professional, go to <https://www.resna.org/>.

Resources for home modifications

- **Waivers- “Home Accessibility Adaptations” service**
 - \$20,000 for a 10 year period or when participant moves into another private home
 - 3 bids usually required
- **PA Accessible Housing Program**
 - Funded by DCED and administered by Self Determination Housing PA and some local Housing/Redevelopment Authorities
 - Resource: <https://www.inglis.org/programs-and-services/inglis-community-services/self-determination-housing-of-pennsylvania-sdhp/home-modification-program>

Resources for home modifications, continued

- OVR can be a resource for home modifications if part of an employment plan
- PHFA provides loans for home modifications for home buyers with disabilities who get their mortgage through PHFA. These loans do not have to be repaid until the home is sold or remortgaged.
 - <https://www.phfa.org/programs/ppd.aspx>
- USDA provides 1% interest loans for home repairs which can include accessibility modifications in areas of PA designated rural.
 - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants/pa>

Resources for home modifications, continued

- PA Assistive Technology Foundation provides low interest loans for AT, home modifications and purchase of vans to be modified
<https://patf.us/>
- Private funding sources-See PATF's Funding Your Assistive Technology guide for a list: <https://patf.us/who-we-are/publications/funding-your-assistive-technology/>
- Habitat for Humanity provides some home mods for older adults
 - <https://www.habitat.org/our-work/aging-in-place>

Understanding Fair Housing Rights

- <https://renters.equalhousing.org/fair-housing/fair-housing-rights-for-people-with-disabilities/>
- **Reasonable Accommodations**
 - <https://www.equalhousing.org/fair-housing-topics/reasonable-accommodations-for-people-with-disabilities/>
- **Reasonable Modifications:**
 - Landlord must allow if “reasonable” but usually at tenant’s expense
 - <https://www.equalhousing.org/fair-housing-topics/reasonable-modifications-for-people-with-disabilities/>
- **Assistance animals:**
 - Landlord cannot deny a person with a disability the right to have an assistance animal, as long as the animal’s function has a direct connection to the person’s disability
 - <https://www.equalhousing.org/fair-housing-topics/assistance-animals-for-people-with-disabilities/>

Housing Search - Factors to consider

- Review those activities/supports identified as important to/important for participant in Person Centered Housing Planning and consider proximity of potential search locations to the sites of those activities/supports
- Also consider Access to banks, post office, and public offices
- Also consider Access to supermarkets, groceries and awareness of food insecurity

Housing Search, continued

- **If rural location is desired by participant, consider availability of transportation, AT/remote supports**
- **Based on preference for sharing housing and preferred housing model and preferences above, determine areas where housing is available within the participant's budget**
- **May not have much choice in location if housing subsidy is obtained**

Housing Search Tools

- <https://www.pahousingsearch.com/> Excellent search tool for apartments, especially subsidized apartments in private apartment buildings
 - Allows search by location, apartment size, accessibility features and price
- Work with real estate agents and property managers
- Regional differences

Resources for Review of Lease or Mortgage terms:

- SDHP's PREP training and course book. Go to <https://www.inglis.org/programs-and-services/inglis-community-services/self-determination-housing-of-pennsylvania-sdhp/sdhp-calendar-for-date-of-next-training>
- <https://renters.equalhousing.org/application-lease/things-to-consider-before-renting/>

Who Will Sign Lease/Mortgage?

- Will landlord/mortgage company question legal capacity of participant to sign on their own? Consider resources to assist participant in recruiting decision supporters and inform landlord/mortgage company of supported decision making to avoid need for a co-signer
- Resources:
 - www.supporteddecisionmaking.org
 - <https://www.disabilityrightspa.org/resources/#estate-planning-substitute-decision-making-guardianship>
- Does participant lack credit acceptable to landlord/mortgage company so co-signer will be required?
 - See “Review Credit” slide

Preparing for move-in

- **Ensuring accessibility modifications are in place**
- **Arranging for move of furnishings & belongings**
- **Obtaining additional furnishings**
- **Arranging for utilities**
- **Connecting with housemate (if any) and natural supports to ensure that they are also ready for move-in**
- **Checking with responsible party (service agency, Common Law Employer or Managing Employer) that staffing at new home is in place**

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