

# Resource Guide Will Assist Individuals with Developmental Disabilities



by Michael Chaney

The Florida Housing Coalition announces a new partnership with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) to produce a Florida-specific, county-by-county, residential resource guide. The purpose of this project is to educate people on all of Florida's available residential options for people with developmental disabilities. Once complete, this residential resource guide can be used by individuals with disabilities, along with their family and support network, to evaluate their individual housing needs and determine the most appropriate residential options for their specific situation. The FDDC advocates for and promotes meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities, such as autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. This resource guide will enhance these individuals' inclusive housing efforts.



(SSI), the shortage of available housing units in Florida is acute. The SSI monthly payment for an individual in Florida is \$674. If SSI represents an individual's sole source of income, that person can only afford a monthly rent of \$202. Statewide, this income was equal to 19.5% of the area median income. A person with a disability receiving SSI would have to spend 115% of their monthly income to rent an efficiency unit and 128% of their monthly income for a one-bedroom unit.

There is no 'one-stop shop' where people with developmental disabilities can obtain a Florida county-by-county listing of all affordable housing information with details about where and how to apply for housing assistance. This tends to make locating affordable housing difficult and confusing. This guide will make that process easier.

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Finding safe, accessible and affordable housing is a significant challenge for many individuals with disabilities. Although there are many who have a job and other resources, for individuals whose sole income is Supplemental Security Income



*Enjoying the independence of living at home with the assistance of a caregiver.*

In addition to providing county-specific contacts and housing assistance information, the resource guide will include a Personal Assessment Tool (PAT). The PAT will help identify appropriate housing options for each individual's specific needs. The PAT will address:

- Housing history;
- Identified barriers to housing; and
- Current household finances.

In developing the PAT, the Florida Housing Coalition will convene focus groups with individuals with developmental disabilities to test and improve the PAT's effectiveness.

The resource guide will also offer:

- An overview of several types of housing options;
- An analysis of how to finance each housing option; and
- Examples of individuals benefitting from homeownership, rental and rehabilitation/accessibility modification assistance.

## Coalition Continues Commitment

The upcoming publication continues the Coalition's commitment to addressing low-income populations in Florida with specific needs. In 2007, the FDCC partnered with the Florida Housing Coalition on *Addressing the Housing Needs of Individuals with Disabilities*. This publication provides:

- Best practice housing models and insight into how affordable housing funding decisions are made;
- Identified barriers to housing as a result of focus groups with individuals with disabilities; and
- Policy considerations to use when carrying out housing advocacy efforts.

Many Floridians who are elderly, and people with disabilities, have some of the lowest household incomes.



*Barrier-free housing provides more independence for people with disabilities.*

In 2007, the Coalition organized an *Extremely Low Income Housing Leadership Forum* to focus attention on assistance with, and to discuss resources and challenges involved with, locating housing for people who have extremely low incomes and are homeless.

In 2009, the Coalition created a *Blueprint for Affordable Elder Housing*. Floridians, who are elderly and those with disabilities, also have challenges finding affordable housing. The *Blueprint* offers recommendations to local governments and citizens for more elder-friendly and affordable housing solutions.

The Coalition also worked with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) on implementing the Housing Locator Service, [www.floridahousingsearch.org](http://www.floridahousingsearch.org), for affordable rental housing.

## Survey of Housing Professionals

Florida is fortunate to have far greater financial resources than other states for housing people who have extremely low incomes because of the dedicated Sadowski Act Trust Fund, which will be highlighted in the upcoming residential resource guide. The county-by-county section will feature a number of excellent nonprofits providing supportive housing and housing for individuals with disabilities and others living in extremely low-income households.



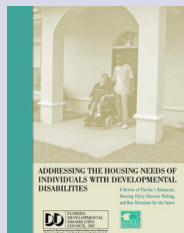
The Housing Coalition needs input from Florida's housing professionals as it produces this new resource guide, and will soon launch a formal survey of its members. The survey results will be integrated into the resource guide, which will be showcased at the Coalition's 2012 Conference.

We want *Housing News Network* readers to contact the Coalition to share information about local groups that offer housing assistance, specifically for individuals with development disabilities. Tell us about recent assistance you offered individuals with development disabilities as we identify examples of home purchase, rental housing, rehabilitation assistance and group homes to feature in the guide. Call 850-878-4219 or email: [info@flhousing.org](mailto:info@flhousing.org) with your examples. **HNN**

# Website Resources

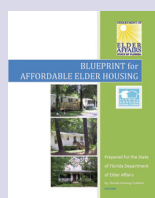
The Coalition's website has helpful publications about housing for individuals with disabilities and others with specific needs.

## *Addressing the Housing Needs of Individuals with Disabilities*



In partnership with the Coalition, this FDDC report provides recommendations, best practice models and policy considerations for use by advocates for housing options for people with disabilities. The resources are also helpful for people providing housing assistance to extremely low-income households. <http://www.flhousing.org/addressing-housing-needs-individuals-disabilities>

## *Blueprint for Affordable Elder Housing*



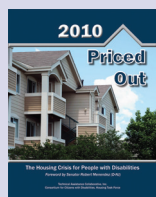
Resources abound on affordable housing, housing assistance programs, accessible designs for people with disabilities and who are elderly, healthy aging and healthy, livable communities. This Blueprint summarizes and offers recommendations for more elder-friendly and affordable housing solutions. <http://www.flhousing.org/blueprint-affordable-elder-housing>

## *Out of Reach Report*



The National Low Income Housing Coalition's annual Out of Reach Report documents the severe affordability difficulties for individuals with disabilities and other specific-needs populations who have very low or extremely low household incomes. This Report calculates the housing wage and other housing affordability data for every state, metropolitan area, combined nonmetropolitan area and county in the country. <http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2011/>

## *Priced Out*



This report from the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force and the Technical Assistance Collaborative focuses even greater attention on the housing needs of people receiving SSI. Since 1998, every two years the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force and the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) have published Priced Out, a report which compares the monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of people with serious and long-term disabilities to local U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Market Rents for modestly priced one- bedroom and studio/efficiency rental units.

*Priced Out in 2010* reveals that:

- On a national average, people with disabilities living on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) paid 112% of their income to rent a modest one-bedroom unit priced at the fair market rent. Rents for smaller studio/efficiency apartments, were 99% of SSI.
- Within Florida's federally defined housing market areas, the cost of a one-bedroom rental unit ranged from a low of 80% of SSI payments in the Baker County housing market area to a high of 164% in the West Palm Beach/Boca Raton housing market area. <http://www.tacinc.org/resources/data/pricedout/index.php>