Transformation Toward Community-Based Housing and Alternative Residential Models

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YAI's Housing BIP project

Assess housing preferences and support individuals interested in community-based housing and alternative residential models.
Main deliverables: Housing BIP

1. Develop a housing resource guide

2. Develop a person-centered housing assessment tool

3. Administer the assessment tool to 60 individuals

4. Develop housing plans for individuals interested in community-based housing/alternative residential settings

5. Identify housing barriers

6. Organize housing summit
1) Housing Resource Guide

Develop a well-researched resource guide that identifies housing options available to individuals with IDD

- Contracted with Health Management Associates
- Reviewed initial drafts of the guide
Housing Resource Guide

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How Do I Start?

Welcome to the YAI Network Roadmap to Housing. We’re glad you have chosen to use this guide, and we’re grateful for the chance to help you and your family as you find your way to the housing that fits you best. There are a lot of things to consider as you undertake this journey, and this guide will walk you through them.

Before beginning your journey to housing, if you haven’t done so already, you will need to consult with a Physician to get an evaluation and a diagnosis. This evaluation and the resulting diagnosis will help you determine for which services and supports you are eligible.

Educate Yourself About the Key Concepts

You will hear a lot of terms throughout your journey that you will want to understand. Sometimes it begins to sound a bit like a foreign language! We have included a complete Glossary in Appendix A (on page xx) to get you started.

Go in the OPWDD Front Door

The New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities has established a Front Door, which is their person centered approach for people with developmental disabilities that prioritizes each individual’s choices, needs, and desires in making decisions. The Front Door strives to:

- Improve the way people learn about OPWDD and available service options
- Better connect individual needs to available services
- Give people as many opportunities as possible for self-direction

In order to “enter” the Front Door, you should contact your local Developmental Disabilities Regional Office’s (DDRO) Eligibility Coordinator (see the map to the right to determine what DDRO is responsible for your county). To determine who to contact in your community, visit OPWDD’s Eligibility Coordinator Listing webpage.

Note that you will need to provide the following information to the Eligibility Coordinator for his/her review:

- A psychological report/IQ test
**How Do I Afford to Live?**

Life is about much more than housing. In order to thrive in the community, you will need an income that ensures you access to things like transportation, recreation, healthcare. This section of the Roadmap will help you determine what additional resources you may be able to access to support these other activities necessary for daily living.

**Governmental Support**

There are many different types of government support that you can access to assist with expenses that you may encounter after your housing transition.

Medicaid

Medicaid eligibility is important both for the healthcare services that it enables you to access, but also for the other benefits that rely on Medicaid eligibility, like the housing supports you need. You must be eligible for and enrolled in Medicaid to enroll in the HCBS waiver, Care at Home waiver, or Medicaid Service Coordination programs. Individuals with disabilities age 18 years or older are eligible for Medicaid if their income and resources (bank accounts, life insurance, etc.), are below a certain amount.

**TIP:** You can apply for Medicaid while SSI is still pending (when your application for SSI is made) in order to maximize the retroactive period for Medicaid coverage.

**Medicaid Spend-Down**

For people with disabilities whose income is too high for general Medicaid eligibility, there is a program through which you may still be able to get help with your medical bills. This program, officially named the Medicaid Excess Income program, is sometimes also referred to as the "Spenddown program" or the "Surplus Income program."

The program works as follows: the amount your income is over the Medicaid level is called excess income. Think of it like a deductible. If you are eligible for Medicaid except for having excess income and you can show that you have medical bills are equal to or exceed your excess income in a particular month, Medicaid will pay your additional medical bills beyond that for the rest of that month. This can include outpatient care, doctor and dental visits, lab tests, prescription drugs, and long-term care in the community such as home care and assisted living.

If this program is something in which you are interested in participating, you can visit your local Department of Social Services (see the NYS DOP Local Departments of Social Services webpage) to let them know you are interested in learning more about how to enroll.

**Medicaid Buy-In**

People with disabilities who are working and earning more than the allowable limits for regular Medicaid may be eligible to retain their healthcare coverage through Medicaid through the Medicaid Buy-in program. To qualify you must

- Be a resident of New York State;

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### How Do I Get Housing Support?

In order to thrive in your new home, you will need financial support to help you cover the costs of the personal support you will need to help you thrive in the independent environment of your choice. You will also need to make some decisions about the type of personal support you want and need. The Housing Assessment Tool in Appendix D is a valuable tool for helping you make some of these decisions.

**Financial Housing Support**

There are a number of different types of financial assistance that are important for supporting your housing choices.

**Personal Resource Allocation**

Your Personal Resource Allocation will be determined by your unique healthcare and support needs, and will result in a dollar amount that is specific to you. When you go in OPWDD’s Front Door today, you will complete the Coordinated Assessment System (CAS-NY) tool, which will capture these needs and help OPWDD generate the amount for your PRA.

**Individualized Supports and Services Grant**

An Individualized Supports and Services (ISS) grant can be used to help pay for rent. These are state funds that are provided to individuals with disabilities to assist them to live independently in the community.

**Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program**

The Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) provides services to chronically ill or physically disabled individuals who have a medical need for help with activities of daily living (ADLs) or skilled nursing services. Under this program, you or your family will have the flexibility and freedom to choose your own caregivers. This means that you assume full responsibility for hiring, training, supervising, and, if needed, terminating the employment of persons providing the services.

In order to participate in CDPAP, you must have your doctor send a completed Physician’s Order for Services to your local social services district, who will then complete a social and nursing assessment. The Nurse Assessor will determine whether you can appropriately participate in CDPAP and (s)he will recommend an amount, frequency, and duration for services.

**Home and Community-Based Services**

Home and Community-Based Services provide services and supports to individuals with long term needs and their families to enable them to remain at home in the community. These services are designed for individuals who, but for these services, require the level of care provided in a long-term care facility. HCBs services may include:

- Community Habilitation
- Day Habilitation Services
How Do I Choose Where to Live?

Now that you have figured out where and how you want to live, now it's time to find the place and make some decisions about whether you want to rent or buy your home. First, you can think about location. Decide what your location preferences are (what is important to you (goals, likes/dislikes, special interests) and what is important for you (what is needed to ensure your health and safety)). Some questions to ask include:

- What county?
- Urban/suburban/rural?
- Near public transportation?
- Walk to shopping?
- House/Apartment/Farm?

Know Your Rights

People with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. A tenant has a right to privacy, meaning that a landlord can only enter the property with proper notice and for specific purposes, such as making repairs. Additionally, a tenant has the right to have repairs done and has protections against eviction.

Through the Fair Housing Act, discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on disability is prohibited. It also requires housing providers to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities if the accommodation is necessary to allow the person with the disability to live in the unit (i.e., allowing a service animal in a no pets apartment). Landlords/sellers cannot:

- Ask what is your disability, the nature of your disability, the severity of your disability or how your disability was acquired
- Ask what services you are receiving and if you can live independently
- Discriminate against you because of your appearance
- Select the type of unit they think you need

If you believe you have experienced housing discrimination, you may file complaints within one year of the incident by calling 311 to speak to the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). Learn more by going to the CCHR website here.

Figure Out How Much You Can Afford

Whether you want to rent or buy, you will need to figure out what your monthly budget so that you know what type of home you can afford. Use the expense checklist in Appendix E to make sure you have taken into account all of the expenses associated with your home.

Identify Other Potential Sources of Purchase or Rental Support

There are many other sources of support that cover the costs of actual housing (as opposed to supports).
2) Housing Assessment Tool

Develop a person-centered tool to assess individuals interested in community-based housing/alternative residential settings

- Tool was developed
- Pictorial component was developed
Housing Assessment Tool

Example items

• What type of place would you like to live in?
• Do you want to live alone or with roommates?

• The supports (or help) you may need to perform a variety of daily activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity of Daily Living</th>
<th>I’m independent</th>
<th>I may need help, but don’t want any</th>
<th>I want supervision</th>
<th>I can do it with some help</th>
<th>I need someone to be with me all the way</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showering/Shaving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grooming (e.g., hair care)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• Scenarios

1. You are in your apartment with one of your roommates and he or she begins yelling. What would be the best thing to do to handle the situation?
2. You are in your apartment alone. The doorbell rings. You look through the peephole, but you do not recognize the person. They begin to call out saying “hello, hello is anyone home?” How do you respond?
Housing Assessment Tool

Pictorial Component

Neighborhood Amenities
Housing Assessment Tool

Pictorial Component

Types of Housing
3) Administer Tool

Administer the Housing Assessment Tool to 60 individuals living in our certified residences and on our “residential waitlist”

• To date, 58 housing assessments have been completed
4) Housing Plans

Develop housing plans for individuals who expressed an interest in exploring community-based/alternative residential settings

- From the assessments, 33 individuals expressed an interest in exploring housing options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Options</th>
<th>Support/Training Recommended</th>
<th>Key People</th>
<th>Environmental Modification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLU ISS Apartment</td>
<td>Emergency response Cooking skills Self-medication Money skills</td>
<td>Family Staff</td>
<td>Elevator Pill organizer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) Housing Barriers

Identify housing barriers for those who are not ready to transition yet

From the assessments, 22 individuals were identified as not ready to transition because of the following barriers:

- Need more independent living skills (money management, cooking)
- Personal choice (want to only live with family)
6) Housing Summit

Organize a housing summit with key stakeholders

- Collaborating with NYSACRA and WIHD
- Summit will be held at Baruch College on March 24, 2016
- Main topics will cover:
  - Housing options for individuals with IDD
  - Key findings from YAI’s BIP housing
  - Technologies to facilitate independent living
  - Short- and long-term initiatives to increase community-based housing and alternative residential models
Opportunities

YAI’s Housing BIP project has created opportunities to
- think beyond our traditional residential models
- develop a housing resource guide and assessment tool
- collaborate with other organizations on housing issues
Challenges

Challenges that we have experienced to date include:

- A late start to the grant which meant completing as many tasks as possible with limited resources.

- A recognition that NYC real estate and rental markets are quite challenging for the general population.

- The need for OPWDD to support individuals and families who are not priority #1 or #2 on the waitlist for housing development.

- The need for start-up funds for the development of uncertified/ISS apartments.