



Delaware Housing Coalition

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW REPORT DETAILS HOUSING NEEDS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN DELAWARE

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INCLUDES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY CHANGES AND ACTION

Dover, Delaware - April 16, 2012 -A new report on the housing needs for people with disabilities in Delaware was released today at the Duncan Center in Dover, by the collaboration of disability and housing advocates who have worked on the study for over a year.

The report, "**Community and Choice: The Housing Needs for People with Disabilities in Delaware**," was produced by the Housing Sub-Committee of the Governor's Commission on Community-Based Alternatives and State Council for Persons with Disabilities, and Delaware Housing Coalition. It is an in-depth study of housing needs and policy recommendations to improve affordable, accessible, and integrated community housing opportunities in Delaware.

THE NEED

The report estimates that there are 108,500 people with disabilities in the State of Delaware. An additional approximately 4,600 people in Delaware live in nursing facilities and are excluded from these numbers, though many likely have disabilities. In Delaware, 11% of adults aged 18-64 and 31% of adults over 65 have a disability. As the population ages - with 30% of Delaware's population projected to be over 60 by 2040 - the number of Delawareans with disabilities will only increase.

People with disabilities typically have lower incomes than those without disabilities, are far more likely to be in poverty, and are more likely to need housing assistance. People with severe disabilities that interfere with their ability to work or with activities of daily or independent living are even more likely to be in poverty, an estimated 26% compared to 17% of all people with disabilities and 10% of people with no disabilities. An estimate for Delaware produced for this report suggests there are at least 4,600 nonelderly very low income renter households who have both a disability and a severe housing need - households in need of rental assistance.

"People with disabilities are over-represented among the poor," said Sandy Tuttle, co-chair of the Housing Sub-Committee. "As our report indicates, in Delaware, almost 40% of people with disabilities have income below 200% of the poverty level. People with disabilities make up 19% of those in poverty in the state."

"Almost 62% of Delaware renter households with extremely low-incomes are severely cost-burdened, paying more than 50% of their income for housing. This accounts for almost 13,000 households in our state," said Ken Smith, Executive Director of the Delaware Housing Coalition.

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Dedicated to making affordable housing available in every Delaware community and to all Delawareans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for accessible, affordable housing is a major barrier to people with disabilities living in the community, and housing needs severely limit the options of people with disabilities to live in the least restrictive setting of their choice.

To improve the availability of affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities in Delaware, the working group offers four broad recommendations:

1. Accessibility: Increase the availability of and access to rental and homeownership opportunities with accessibility features;
2. Affordability: Increase the availability of and access to affordable housing for people with disabilities;
3. Community: Build a community-based system of care with a range of housing options; and
4. Systems: Improve the affordable housing and disabilities services systems that serve people with disabilities.

As Delaware's housing and disabilities services systems work to prioritize community care and settings for people with disabilities, we should be able to serve more people, better, with fewer resources - hopefully allowing these systems to begin to absorb the natural increases in people needing assistance. However, many different pieces must come together for successful transitions to community care to work, at the individual, agency, and system levels.

ABOUT THE WORKGROUP AND THE REPORT

The Housing Sub-Committee and the Delaware Housing Coalition came together in February 2011 to encourage wide collaboration, facilitate the collection of data, conduct focus groups and interviews, collectively review research products, and discuss and refine the study's recommendations. The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) provided assistance with data collection, research and analysis. The various divisions of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) provided data, input and feedback on the report.

These are links to the [Executive Summary](#) and the [full report](#), with extensive information on housing needs and a more complete discussion of the recommendations. #####