

## Michigan's Olmstead Housing BARRIERS

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Regardless of the type of disability or challenges an individual may face, housing of an individual's preference is often unavailable and leads to situations where a person may "settle" or be "stuck" in housing that is not their choice.

Many barriers are present in today's housing stock across Michigan. These themes cross different specific populations and are more based on individual need and preference, rather than one group. This includes representation of those with developmental disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities, and those who are interested in transitioning from nursing homes. It is important to note that many of the themes of this position paper also address the concept of "aging in place". Most of us will be impacted by some disability or illness in the future that will ultimately impact our decision in where we will live.\*

In surveying various advocacy groups and subpopulations affected by the Olmstead ruling, the following basic themes were presented:

- Limited accessibility in current housing stock, to include multifamily units as well as individual dwellings.
- Limited availability of mixed use developments
- Limited affordable housing stock in all housing categories
- Limited availability of subsidies to include project based vouchers and housing choice vouchers

As Olmstead rulings demand the need to provide integrated settings to those with disabilities to truly be a part of their community of choice, it is essential that the barriers and obstacles presented in Michigan be addressed systematically in order to move forward and increase options in the housing spectrum.

<b>Barriers/Unmet Needs/Challenges</b>	<b>Potential Resources/Leveraging/Comments</b>
Limited stock of safe and affordable housing at the same time there is an increased demand for more inclusive community settings rather than licensed homes.	Increase stock of safe and affordable housing in various communities to include varied locations and settings. Utilize funding sources such as tax credit programs (LIHTC), HOME dollars,

	<p>etc. to create diverse communities that allow for both actual subsidized units and other units that are simply affordable (not just covered below 30% AMI).</p>
<p>Not enough subsidized housing stock. Many of the individuals who would be interested in housing have limited fixed incomes, related to SSI/SSDI and other retirement programs, and need the subsidy to make housing affordable.</p>	<p>Increase the availability of a wide variety of subsidies that provide equal access to those with disabilities rather than any one subpopulation.</p>
<p>Currently there are long waitlists for Housing Choice Vouchers in most communities across the state. The only list that has substantial movement right now is the MSHDA Homeless Preference Voucher List (HPV). This list requires a person be literally homeless to qualify with plans to also require certification of homelessness at time of the actual pull.</p> <p>The reality is that in most situations, persons with developmental disabilities are typically not literally homeless but rather go into adult foster care or Group Homes when housing of their choice is unavailable. This is not to say it is a perfect or ideal placement. Often this is an emergency situation and people are placed there due to lack of other options and it is really not the appropriate setting for the individual. As they are no longer at risk of homelessness, they become “stuck” if other options are not available, or once there other alternatives are not routinely or actively considered because ultimately the person has been placed.</p>	<p>Access to PHA waitlists, perhaps with priority for those with disabilities through arrangement with local housing authorities. Potential separate waitlist at MSHDA in addition to HPV.</p> <p>Increased emphasis on the need to review housing placement through the person centered planning process at regular intervals with all residents of group homes and other structured placements. While it is a mandate already across the State, it is often not enforced. Insure that alternative funding sources are available to allow the person to move into housing of their choice.</p>
<p>In other situations with individuals with limited fixed incomes such as SSI/SSDI, the equation necessary to make rent affordable is 3 individuals to cover rent and housing related expenses. This often requires education, linkage and coordination with housing resources and supports. These sort of scenarios typically present in situations where three individuals with developmental disabilities choose to live together to share both supports and income to create a sustainable home in their community. Choice must always be paramount, the individuals must choose to live together and not be placed based on convenience. It should also be recognized that while many view this as a long term housing option, the individuals should routinely be able to examine their housing and make changes as needed.</p>	<p>Increased emphasis on housing planning with education occurring well before parents age out of ability to care for adult children. These topics should be folded into curriculum as part of transition planning in cooperation with school systems as well as with local community mental health agencies long before the person necessarily is enrolled in those services. Getting My Own Address is a model.</p>
<p>Some individuals do have the ability to acquire housing through inheritance or family resources. In these situations it is imperative to develop a plan or tool to insure that the house is not considered</p>	<p>Provide education to families regarding legal tools such as special needs trusts.</p>

<p>income and would negatively impact the person’s ability to access Social Security and other entitlements that allow for long term sustainability.</p>	
<p>To make all housing accessible for those we serve there has to be systems in place to make communities truly integrated by having real access to public transportation/mass transit to be able to go to work or school, and to visit families and friends.</p>	<p>Need for more expanded public transportation/mass transit.</p>
<p>There is an anticipated increase of individuals diagnosed with Autism moving to adulthood in the next 5 years. In overgeneralized terms, this group may have specific housing needs, including the need for detached single family residences rather than apartments.</p>	<p>Need for increased capacity / stock of single family dwellings for this group. It should be noted that other individuals across different subpopulations may have similar needs.</p>
<p>There are not enough programs to provide support and guidance to prepare individuals with interdependent living situations. This includes the individual themselves as well as direct care staff and supports that are often utilized to assist in these settings. While this could really be beneficial to a variety of populations recent data and anecdotal information indicates that this is critical when working with persons with autism or Asperger’s. Staff cannot simply utilize techniques that were successful with other individuals when working with this group and need specialized training.</p>	<p>Develop and implement more programs based on best practices for individuals transitioning to interdependent living situations from group homes or family homes.</p> <p>Develop curriculum for staffing resources to ensure that there is a minimum level of training and knowledge base before working with individuals in an interdependent living situation. Access to resources/consultants/crisis planning when working with individuals in interdependent settings.</p>
<p>Permanent supportive housing programs provide another resource to those experiencing homelessness to receive subsidy to make rent affordable while also providing housing case management services. Many times these programs are “scattered site” and the program participant chooses a unit of their choice in the desired community. There are simply not enough slots available for those in need and waitlists can be long to access. The person must be “literally homeless” when their name is pulled, not just when they were put on the list.</p>	<p>Not enough PSH slots available. Need to increase this option for those experiencing homelessness as well as providing similar programs for others with housing needs that may not be homeless but are not in housing of their choice. Explore means to transition persons in other placements that desire to have independent housing.</p>
<p>Home buying programs that provide assistance to make a purchase often are inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Barriers include things such as lack of a credit rating, limited fixed incomes or legal ramifications when an individual has a guardian.</p>	<p>Explore ways to make programs such as HOME more accessible to persons with disabilities. Allow for situations where a person has limited fixed income but has</p>

	identified roommates to share in living costs and staffing to be accounted for in budget calculations.
Need to create a variety of housing choices / structure to meet the needs of persons with disabilities that require housing that will accommodate the specific disability/needs of the individual/household. Often it may be a physical need such as accessibility or an accommodation related to behaviors (i.e. loud noise, need for more open space, etc.). In other situations a person might need to have their own apartment, and not live with others, or there may be a need for access to medical assistance/care, or on a demand basis.	
Often natural supports are willing and able to contribute to a long term housing solution for their family member but there is a gap between the contribution and what is needed for the housing solution. There are sometimes situations where three individuals have pooled together family resources through funds from family, inheritance, and trusts to purchase a home but there is still not enough to make the mortgage monthly payment truly affordable.	Explore new ways for private and public funding to come together to leverage and create sustainable housing. Need for more one time down payment assistance or other programs to reduce monthly mortgage payment or to provide a monthly subsidy to the mortgage payment.
One a home is purchased there is an ongoing need for maintenance and repairs to keep the house habitable. Often persons with disabilities have limited fixed incomes that make this work prohibitive and they are sometimes unable to complete the tasks themselves.  Additionally property taxes can become cost prohibitive when they increase even though it was affordable at time of purchase.	Funding for repair and maintenance. Assistance with property taxes. Move advocacy to caps on property taxes for those who have long term disabilities.
There are often situations when a person has literally “zero income” for a variety of reasons. Often those with a disability have challenges in accessing entitlements and proving they are unable to work, especially in situations such as diagnosis of mental illness and Asperger’s. In these situations the person may present well at times and the disability must be proven to impact work. This limits ability (without verification of entitlements) to access many programs including permanent supportive housing and subsidized housing that has age/disability requirements.	Accommodations for those with “zero income” to contribute to minimum payments required in some housing such as Housing Choice Voucher or Subsidized Housing.  Alternative means to verify disability if entitlements have not been awarded. Increased resources to appeal SSDI/SSI decisions.
Once someone is in housing it often a challenge to maintain the housing due to behaviors related to the disability. This would not necessarily only impact one population and could definitely impact any group we are discussing. This puts the tenant at risk of losing	Increased communication between support providers and landlords to deal with situations proactively, mechanisms to offer

<p>the housing, due to eviction or inability to renew lease at lapse because the housing situation is impacting neighbors' right to "quiet enjoyment" or relates to housekeeping/safety issues.</p>	<p>more support and assistance when situations arise.</p>
<p>Often once people are placed in housing, whatever the setting is, there is potential for abuse and neglect regardless if it is a group home, a private residence, or an apartment. There is a need for an advocacy/watchdog sort of group that is outside and objective rather than the support provider. This is an increasing concern for parents with children with disabilities especially as they know that while they placed their child into a good setting, they will not always be available in the future to keep watch.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Often, even if subsidized housing is available it is limited to certain groups. Age is often a requirement but can be waived if the head of the household has a qualifying disability. There are parents raising children with disabilities that cannot access this housing or other programs because the child is not the head of household. In addition the subsidized housing is often geared towards apartments and quieter living situations and would not meet the needs of the family.</p>	<p>Exploration of housing programs and settings that can provide a subsidy to families that have children with disabilities and limited income.</p> <p>NEW 811</p>