



## Fact Sheet on Housing

### *Lack of Housing Is Demonstration Project's Biggest Challenge*

#### Challenge

A challenge faces the Ohio HOME Choice Demonstration Project's goal of transitioning ~ 2200 elderly people and people with disabilities from institutions to home and community-based settings: **finding enough affordable and accessible housing for the people who are ready to transition.**

The challenge is caused by:

1. Cuts in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) budget, which has reduced the availability of public housing and the number of housing choice vouchers.
2. Federal guidelines that restrict Medicaid funds from being used for housing.
3. Multiple housing initiatives that compete for the same limited resources.

#### Background and Statistics

*Another transition program, Ohio Access Success, cites housing as its top barrier:*

- Ohio learned first-hand how difficult it is to find adequate housing when it launched the demonstration transition project, Ohio Access Success, in 2003. According to the project's final evaluation report, **"the lack of affordable housing was the single largest barrier to community relocation."**
- In fact, by the demonstration project's end, 42% of participants could not relocate due to lack of affordable housing. The waiting list for such housing is long in most places. In some parts of the state, participants could not even apply for Section 8 housing because the waiting list was so long or Section 8 was closed altogether.
- In addition to affordable housing, 25% of participants who were active but did not relocate before the end of the demonstration program needed *accessible* housing, which was even harder to find than subsidized housing. Almost one-third (32%) of participants who relocated also needed accessible housing in order to relocate.

*Statistics cited by the Access Housing Workgroup illustrate the housing challenge:*

- As of 2004, 168,018 non-elderly adults residing in Ohio, receive monthly Supplemental Social Security Income benefits of **\$579.42**. In addition, there are



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278,951 people receiving monthly Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits of \$862.43.

- A study done in 2004 shows that in Ohio, an average of **87.8 %** of SSI benefits are needed to rent a one-bedroom unit and an average of **76.4%** of SSI benefits needed to rent a studio or efficiency unit.
- Although public and private housing complexes that receive federal money are generally required to have 5% of their rental units accessible to people with mobility impairments and 2% of rental units accessible to individuals with hearing or vision impairments, the availability of these units has declined due to inconsistent enforcement of accessibility requirements. In addition, a majority of publicly and privately subsidized housing complexes limit admissions to the elderly.

### **What You Can Do**

- Support people with disabilities, disability advocacy groups and other efforts to educate consumers and elected officials about the need for affordable housing for HOME Choice participants.
- Participate in local and state housing processes in your community.
- Support future HOME Choice Regional Collaboratives (a group of persons led by persons with disabilities and including providers of affordable housing, service and transportation supports, working together to address the needs of people with disabilities in their communities) as a mechanism to communicate with local elected officials about HOME Choice and the role housing plays in the success of the project.

### **For Additional Information**

#### **Contact:**

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