



Alternative Housing Resource Guide



Elizabeth Moscoso-Anderson

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Background

In Champaign County and beyond, housing for individuals with disabilities is chosen, designed, owned, and supported by traditional social service agencies that often rely primarily on state and federal funds. The lack of housing options in the community is severely limiting for many families. Thus, the need to expand funding sources and housing for individuals with disabilities is critical.

Aims

This guide was created for Community Choices, a nonprofit organization in Champaign County which serves individuals with disabilities. This guide is meant to assist individuals and their families begin the process of envisioning and developing an affordable, sustainable alternative housing option.

Each housing project looks different based on the desired support, funding resource, and/or funding available. The guide offers some alternative thinking and critical questions to be considered in the transition to independent living.

The guide utilizes the Community Living Matrix (see below) which succinctly explains housing and support options and may provide more ideas for families in their consideration of housing arrangements and possibilities.

	HOUSING			SUPPORTS		
Housing Type	Ownership Type	Funding of Property	Level of Services	Service Provider	Service Funder	
Home	Single Owner	Individual	Call-in	Family	Individual	
Condo	Condo	Family	Weekly	Roommate	Family	
Apartment	Cooperative	Agency/Organization	Part-time daily (up to 4 hours)	Neighbor	Agency/Organization	
Room	Joint ownership	Grantors	Full-time daily (6+ hours)	Volunteers	Grantors	
Dormitory	Agency/Organization	Financial Institutions	Live-in overnight	Personal Support	Government	
	Government	Government	24-hour daily	Agency/Organization	Government	

Methods

The concept of the guide was created through regular meetings with the Executive Director of Community Choices. Interview questions, protocols, and consent forms were developed through consultations with the agency and LEND trainee. Four case studies were developed based upon interviews with residents and families who had created alternative housing arrangements. Basic demographic information was collected from a pre-interview questionnaire. In the creation of this guide, we posed several questions across four domains to Champaign families to develop our case studies. Some sample questions included:

Section 1: Beginning the process

As you thought of the future for your child, what did you know about housing supports and options for adults with I/DD?

Section 2: Housing criteria

What type of housing did you consider? Why were those options necessary?

Section 3: Support

How much support was your family member receiving prior to living in the housing arrangement?

Describe how you set up and organized the support for the housing set up. How was it funded?

Section 4: Outcomes

How successful do you feel the living arrangement has been?

Describe any unexpected challenges or benefits you or your family member experienced.

Findings

Of the eight individuals who participated, families shared and advised:

- Plan with the focus of, "If I am not here, what will the resident need?"
- Having additional supports, whether that be a supportive roommate or other part-time person to help with general support needs, may become crucial for long-term success
- Think in five year chunks and plan for the long-term
- Look for opportunities to connect with other families in similar situations
- Don't expect the process to be perfect or linear; it may take a few attempts at something to tailor the arrangement to the resident's needs
- Alternative housing can be made affordable – do not let cost deter you

All families reported successful outcomes, unexpected challenges, and benefits.

Conclusion

We hope this guide is a helpful tool in gaining insight to how families in our communities have built their alternative living arrangements and may assist in your own family's process. It is our hope that you are able to see that it is possible to create the future that individuals with disabilities, their families, and their communities desire.

"It is only by acknowledging that you have created everything up until now that you can take charge of creating the future you want." –Jack Canfield

Resources

Center for Independent Futures

We suggest reading the "Alternative Housing Options for Individuals with Disabilities: A Guide for Forming and Implementing Community Partnerships" which may be accessed on the Center for Independent Futures website under free resources.

www.independentfutures.com

PUNS List: Champaign County

To register on the statewide database of the Prioritization of Urgency of Needs of Services (PUNS) List for Champaign County, please contact Champaign County Regional Planning Commission's Independent Service Coordination Team at (217) 328-3313 and ask for the PUNS Intake Coordinator.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Community Choices members who participated in the development of this guide for future families and co-op members to use in planning for alternative housing arrangements! Your input was invaluable in the creation of this guide.

This work was further supported by the Illinois LEND Program [Grant Number: T73MC11047; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)].