

Housing challenges that affect people with ASD in MA

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Unmet demand for supported housing

- AHP looked at the CDC's reported incidence rate of 2.3% in the 2010 birth cohort and found it comparable to approximate rates of 8-year-old students with autism in Massachusetts in 2018.
- We then looked at the profile of who receives housing as an adult through either the Department of Developmental Services or the MassHealth Adult Foster Care program.
- Looking at who is left, an estimated annual 625 to 650 units of supported housing per year beyond what is funded through DDS and MassHealth may be needed.

CEDAC funds miss the mark

- The Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation funds three programs:
 - The Community Based Housing (CBH) Fund – for people with disabilities who are not clients of DDS or DMH
 - The Facilities Consolidation Fund (FCF) – for
 - DDS and DMH clients who are coming out of state institutions, waiting for group homes, or are underserved in group homes
 - DMH clients who are on the streets, in shelters, or institutions
 - The Housing Innovations Funds (HIF) – for other populations
 - Theoretically, DDS clients who don't need a group home level of support could be served through this fund, but in practice CEDAC assumes the needs of DDS and DMH clients are met through the FCF and they are not prioritized under this fund

The current system of allocating CEDAC funds doesn't address the unmet need

Zoning reform is needed to help families

- Many families would like to create an Accessory Dwelling Unit for their family member
- Local zoning presents a major barrier
- Zoning reform would need to permit:
 - Up to two bedrooms to allow a live-in aide when necessary
 - A Special Needs Trust to be considered an owner-occupier
- H. 1370 and S. 908 would meet this need – it is currently in Third Reading

Many people need technical assistance

- Many individuals and their families need help with knowing:
 - Where and how to apply for subsidized housing and vouchers
 - It is not uncommon to see parents list their own names, Social Security numbers, and assets on an application
 - How to keep their applications up to date
 - It is not uncommon for people to move without updating applications
 - Sometimes a teacher helped a young adult with an application and the parents have no record of what was applied for and the young adult doesn't know
 - How to fill out paperwork when they reach the top of a waiting list
 - How to handle annual recertifications once they are in housing

Staffing shortages are a problem

- An individual may have housing, but is unable to utilize support hours, due to staffing shortages
 - Wages through DDS for Adult Companion services are not competitive
 - It is hard to find someone willing to work for a couple of hours a day
 - MassHealth HAS approved a code for Remote Supports, and DDS is starting to roll them out.

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