

Affordable, Accessible, Integrated Housing

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There is a crisis of unmet housing needs for people of all ages with disabilities. California must increase affordable, accessible, and integrated housing for people with disabilities who have the right to live at home, not in institutions.

Why affordable?

- People with disabilities tend to have low incomes. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, only 20.5% of adults with disabilities are in the workforce compared to 69.1% for people without disabilities.¹
- In 2012, Social Security Income (SSI) equaled approximately 20.5% of the average Californian's income. It would take 102% of a monthly SSI check to rent an average studio apartment in California.² Further, cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, home to a large percentage of Californians with disabilities, are considerably more expensive.



***Creating Policy and
System Change for
Independent Living***

Why accessible?

- After more than 25 years of laws requiring physical access in residential buildings, wheelchair users still often can't get in the front door, visit other apartments, turn around in hallways, or use the bathroom.

Why integrated?

- People with disabilities need access to transportation and other community essentials to support independent living and quality of life. However, there are clear barriers to housing choice. In addition to affordability and accessibility, numerous studies report that people with disabilities face the highest rates of housing discrimination.³

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase affordable housing for all Californians that is integrated and inclusive. "Affordable" means people with disabilities spend no more than 30% of their incomes on housing.⁴

- Support the creation of federal and state trust funds for affordable housing.
- Support the fair use of Housing Choice (Section 8) vouchers to effectively provide integrated housing assistance for people with disabilities.

Increase the number of units that adhere to true accessibility standards. Building standards should be clarified and prioritized to provide for true accessibility.

- Adopt and enforce the highest accessibility standards for California with continued alignment of codes such as the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and California Building Code.
- Require publicly funded housing, including tenant housing, residential treatment programs, homeless shelters, and hybrid public-private programs, to include at least 10% of the units (and no less than one unit) fully accessible for people with mobility disabilities and at least 4% of the units fully accessible for people with sensory disabilities.
- Proactively obtain modification funds for older buildings that have no accessible units.

Ensure state and local entities take the steps needed to ensure accessible units are occupied by people who need them.

- Seek the maximum amount of Section 811 federal funding for California housing for people with disabilities.
- Require localities to include in their plans how they intend to make affordable, accessible units available for all people with disabilities, regardless of age.
- Use rent subsidies to allow lower income people with disabilities to live in LIHTC or other below-market-rate units.
- Link people with disabilities to accessible units through dedicated waiting lists.
- Prioritize internal transfers of people with disabilities from inaccessible to accessible units. If necessary, include language in leases to allow for the transfer of non-disabled residents from accessible units to equivalent non-accessible units.

- Allocate additional housing vouchers for people with disabilities who are moving from institutions into the community, as well as individuals at risk of being institutionalized. For example, leverage transitional programs such as Money Follows the Person.

Ensure policies promote integrated housing that is easily accessible to transportation and other key elements that support independent community living for people with disabilities.

- Separate eligibility for integrated housing from specific medicalization requirements. For example, a Medicaid waiver or the need for a social worker should not be necessary to obtain low-income housing.
- Fully fund education about fair housing laws and pursue strict enforcement.
- Outlaw discrimination against individuals using Section 8 vouchers or similar rent subsidies.

California must begin to address this crisis with the goal of supporting independent living in our communities. Housing policies will be most effective when people with disabilities are included in all stages of development, implementation, and evaluation. Additionally, commitment to policy solutions must be supported with sufficient data to inform enforcement and quality improvement efforts.

- 1 *Current Disability Employment Statistics*
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/>
- 2 *Priced out in 2012. Technical Assistance Collaborative*
<http://www.tacinc.org>
- 3 *2013 Fair Housing Trends Report*
<http://www.nationalfairhousing.org/Portals/33/trends2013final.pdf>
- 4 *Affordable Housing. U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development*
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>

State Independent Living Council

VOICE: (866) 866-SILC • (866) 866-7452 • (916) 445-0142

TTY: (866) SILC-TTY • (866) 745-2889

FAX: (916) 445-5973

1600 K Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95814

www.calsilc.org



The California State Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent state agency which, in cooperation with the California State Department of Rehabilitation, prepares and monitors the State Plan for Independent Living.