

**FACT SHEET:
"THE HOME OF YOUR OWN" INITIATIVE**

Q. What is the Home of Your Own Initiative?

A. The home of your own initiative is a grass roots initiative to help people with developmental (and other) disabilities own or control their own housing. It can include personalized support. The initiative's goal is to create an infrastructure of exemplary practices and public and private sector partnerships which link the home mortgage and social services industries to better serve people with disabilities.

Q. What are the barriers to home ownership and control?

A. There are physical, economic, social, and institutional barriers to home ownership for people with mental retardation. These barriers include:

- Lack of personal financial resources;
- Systemic dependence on programs that limit personal choices;
- Limited capacity to create innovative housing and support options; and
- Limited involvement of people with disabilities in these efforts.

Q. What is the historical background of the initiative?

A. First, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) funded Home of Your Own Demonstration Projects in several states designed to promote development of creative strategies for achieving home ownership. Then, on September 1, 1993, the ADD entered into a cooperative agreement with the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire to create a national information and technical assistance center on home ownership/control and personalized support. From this agreement, the National Home of Your Own Alliance was formed. The Alliance is a partnership between the federal government and nationally recognized advocates and leaders whose goal is to create housing and support opportunities that people choose and control.

Q. What are the current activities of the Alliance?

A. The Alliance is currently focused on broad systems change as well as local efforts to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the Alliance is working to:

Provide technical assistance (e.g., develop local demonstrations of home ownership) and training in selected states in order to achieve systems change at the state and local level;

Include and promote the leadership of individuals with disabilities and families in technical assistance and systems change efforts (e.g., build coalitions of housing and disability organizations led by people with disabilities, their families, friends, and advocates)

Analyze national (e.g., Medicaid waiver program, HUD programs) and state policies that impact the availability of housing and support;

Implement strategies to overcome identified policy barriers (e.g., by holding policy forums on legislative advocacy and legislative developments);

Establish a national information and referral system to respond to requests for assistance in dealing with barriers which prevent people from controlling their housing and supports; and

Disseminate information about effective strategies for creating person-controlled housing and support. To this end, a national information clearing house has been formed in collaboration with the Center for Accessible Housing in North Carolina, United Cerebral Palsy Association in Washington, D.C., Co-op Initiatives in Connecticut, the Institute of Disabilities at Temple University in Pennsylvania, and the Human Services Research Institute in Massachusetts. The clearing house administers a toll-free telephone line, a Web-server, and a set of publications and materials based on real-life situations, and produced in formats accessible to the broadest range of audiences possible.

Q. What are the implications for people with mental retardation?

A. Individuals with disabilities must either own or rent the property where they live. Owning a home or controlling the lease empowers a person to make critical decisions about where and with whom he or she lives. The level and intensity of supports to make home ownership a reality must be flexible enough to vary with the changing needs and life circumstances of the individual. Support providers in housing controlled by individuals with disabilities must know, understand, and respect the values, lifestyles, preferences, and expectations of the person receiving services, even when these are different from their own. Therefore, AAMR:

Promotes home ownership or control for all people with disabilities regardless of the severity of their disability;

Advocates for permanent low income housing tax credits and for the expansion of tax credits for people with disabilities;

Promotes and develops cooperative relationships with organizations representing generic service advocates and providers;

Supports public policy that promotes community living opportunities;

Supports activities to increase the availability of safe, accessible, and affordable housing for all low income persons who have a disability;

Advocates for research and evaluation targeted toward community supports and home ownership; and

Encourages federal and state financing for home ownership and community supports.

References

National Home of Your Own Alliance Brochure (free)

Homeowner Brochure (free)

National Home of Your Own Alliance Newsletter (free)

Extending the American Dream: Home Ownership for People with Disabilities (\$8.00)

A Report on Legal and Financial Planning Issues in the Home of Your Own Project (\$2.00)

Exemplary Practices in the Quest Toward Home Ownership (\$8.00)

Housing InfoPak (\$4.00)

Supports and Personal Planning InfoPak (\$4.00)

A Home of Your Own Video (\$20.00)

Toward a Home of One's Own: A Workshop for Families on the Journey (Training material, \$2.00)

Note: All publications listed are available from the National Home of Your Own Alliance listed in the Resources section.

Resources

National Home of Your Own Alliance, University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability/UAP, 7 Leavitt Lane, Suite 101, Durham, NH, 03824-3522, 1-800-220-8770.

Ray Graham Association for People with Disabilities, 340 West Butterfield Road, 3C, Elmhurst, IL 60126, (708) 530-4554, (708) 832-7337(F).

Author

Written for AAMR by Cathy Ficker Terrill (for contact information, please see the listing for the Ray Graham Association in the Resource section), and Alicia A. Cone, VCU-RRTC on Supported Employment, 1314 West Main Street, Richmond, VA 23220, (804)828-1851, (804)828-2193(F)
