

Piecing it all
together
in your
community



PLAYING THE HOUSING GAME

**Learning to Use HUD's
Consolidated Plan
to Expand Housing
Opportunities for People
with Disabilities**



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INTRODUCTION

Did you know that there is money available to increase the amount of affordable housing in your community? And did you know that the disability community has both the right and the opportunity to be involved in deciding how this money is used? People with disabilities, their families, and advocates can get involved and influence these decisions through a process called the Consolidated Plan (ConPlan). This guidebook provides answers to key questions about this federally mandated housing plan, including: What is the ConPlan? How does it influence housing policies and federally funded housing activities in communities? And, most importantly, how can the disability community use the ConPlan process to expand housing opportunities for people with disabilities?



The ConPlan is a long-term housing plan that controls access to US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) resources used to expand affordable housing opportunities. The ConPlan is intended to be a five-year comprehensive housing strategy that includes several pieces of key information. The ConPlan contains a housing needs assessment, which documents the need for affordable housing within in a state or community, and both a five-year comprehensive plan and a one-year action plan, which describe the activities that will be undertaken each year to address these needs.

HUD requires all states and localities that have already developed a ConPlan, to create a new plan during the year 2000 that covers the next five-year period. In order to ensure people with disabilities receive their "fair share" of federal housing resources, it is crucial the disability community be actively involved in the creation of their community or state ConPlan. Fortunately, the process used to develop these plans requires everyone to have the opportunity to participate and provide input, including people with disabilities and disability advocates. The information and approaches detailed in this guidebook will help the disability community participate in the ConPlan process, with the goal of expanding federally funded housing approaches for people with disabilities.

DEFINITIONS

While reading this guidebook you will note some technical terms will be used with which you may not be familiar. In order to facilitate the reader's understanding, these terms are defined below.

ConPlan Resources or ConPlan Funds

These terms are used interchangeably to refer to the HUD programs (i.e., Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Shelter Grant, HOME, and Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS), and the funds supporting these programs, that are directly controlled by the Consolidated Plan.



Localities

This term refers to a geographic area, such as a city, urban county, town, or community, and is used to differentiate this area from the state as a whole. Each HUD program controlled by the Consolidated Plan utilizes its own terminology to define the geographic area where the funds may be spent. For example, the HOME program uses the term "participating jurisdictions" to refer to cities with populations greater than 50,000 and urban counties with populations greater than 250,000 that receive federal HOME funding directly from HUD. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, uses "entitlement communities" to mean those communities or counties that, due to size and other HUD criteria, are eligible to receive CDBG funding directly from HUD.

For matters of convenience, this guidebook will use the general terms "state" or "locality" to define all those federally defined geographic areas that are required to submit a ConPlan in order to obtain any federal housing resources.

CITATIONS



Whenever possible, the laws or HUD documents that govern the ConPlan or related documents have been referenced in the main text, endnotes, or citations section of this guidebook. Many of the HUD regulations are found at Part 24 of the US Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and are cited in the text as "24 CFR."

To obtain free copies of the Code of Federal Regulations including the HUD regulations, visit the HUD web site (<http://www.hud.gov>) or call HUD's Community Connections at (800) 998-9999 or your local HUD field office. You may also find copies of the regulations in the Federal Register at your local library.

