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(CCD) HOUSING TASK FORCE

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Major Findings of <i>Priced Out in 2002</i>	1
The Housing Crisis Continues	2
<i>Priced Out in 2002</i> Methodology	3
Percent of SSI Benefits Needed to Rent a One-Bedroom Housing Unit	4
SSI and Median Income Comparisons by State	5
How to Use the Information in <i>Priced Out in 2002</i>	6
Effect of State SSI Supplements	8
Increases in SSI Compared to Increases in Housing Costs	9
SSI Benefits Compared to the Housing Wage	9
Housing Affordability for People with Disabilities in Your Community	11

Priced Out in 2002: Housing Crisis Worsens for People with Disabilities

By Emily Cooper and Ann O'Hara

Overview

Housing is a basic human need. For people with disabilities to live in the community and achieve and sustain full participation in community life, they must have an affordable place to live – a place to call home. Unfortunately, for more than 3.7 million adults with disabilities living on federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, the goal of having a home of one's own – whether a small studio apartment or a single family house – has become even more impossible to achieve.

In 2002, the combination of extreme poverty and record-setting rent levels continued to fuel this housing crisis in virtually every housing market in the United States. In order to document the full scope of this housing crisis and its affects on the most vulnerable people with disabilities, the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force once again published *Priced Out*, a biennial comparison of rental housing costs and SSI income. This issue of *Opening Doors* is based on the information contained in *Priced Out in 2002* that documents the desperate plight of people with disabilities who are now entirely “priced out” of the rental housing market.

***Priced Out in 2002* documents the desperate plight of people with disabilities who are now entirely “priced out” of the rental housing market.**

Major Findings of *Priced Out in 2002*

By comparing SSI monthly income (equal to \$545 in 2002) to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Market Rents across the United States, *Priced Out in 2002* documents that:

- In 2002, for the first time ever, the average national rent was greater than the amount of income received by Americans with disabilities from the SSI program. Specifically, the average rent for a modest one-bedroom rental unit in the United States was equal to 105 percent of federal SSI benefit amounts – up from 98 percent as reported in *Priced Out in 2000*.
- In 2002, people with disabilities were priced out of every housing market area in the United States. Of the nation's 2,702 market areas, there was not a single area where modestly priced rents for efficiency or one-bedroom units were affordable for people with disabilities receiving SSI.
- People with disabilities continue to be the poorest people in the nation. As a national average, SSI benefits in 2002 were equal to only 18.8 percent of the one-person median household income.
- Rental housing costs continued to increase much more rapidly than the income of people with disabilities.



Opening Doors

A housing publication for the disability community

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The Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides state-of-the-art technical assistance and training to housing and human service organizations so that they may achieve positive outcomes in their work on behalf of people who are disadvantaged and/or disabled. For more information, please contact the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc., 535 Boylston Street, Suite 1301, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. Phone/TTY: 617-266-5657 or Fax: 617-266-4343 or email: info@tacinc.org.



The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is a national coalition of consumer, advocacy, provider, and professional organizations who advocate on behalf of people of all ages with disabilities and their families. CCD has created the CCD Housing Task Force to focus specifically on housing issues that affect people with disabilities.

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From 2000 to 2002, rental housing costs rose at twice the rate of SSI cost-of-living adjustments. In some high-cost housing market areas, increases in rental housing costs were six times higher than SSI benefits increases.

- People with disabilities receiving SSI benefits needed to triple their income to afford a decent one-bedroom unit in 2002. This finding is based on the National Low Income Housing Coalition's 2002 Housing Wage of \$12.08 per hour, which is approximately 3.5 times higher than the SSI equivalent hourly wage of \$3.43.

The Housing Crisis Continues

Today, millions of people with disabilities do not have a safe and affordable place they can call home. Instead, over 1.9 million people remain in public institutions, nursing homes, and unsafe board and care homes. In addition to these individuals, 1.4 million people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits live in seriously substandard housing and/or in housing that costs more than half their income. More than 640,000 people are not even counted in housing needs estimates because they continue to live at home with aging parents whose constant worry is where their adult child will live after they die. Hundreds of thousands of people receiving disability benefits are homeless on any given night.

During the 1990s, rental housing costs rose dramatically and, by 2002, people with disabilities receiving SSI were completely priced out of the rental housing market. During this same time period, the federal government continued to back away from its long-standing commitment to provide housing assistance for the poorest Americans and the problem of homelessness grew worse. Like elderly households that are also expected to live on fixed incomes and government benefits, people with disabilities need housing assistance in order to solve their housing problems. Unfortunately, government housing policies continue to fail to address the needs of people with disabilities and others who are extremely poor. Without some type of ongoing housing assistance, such as federally subsidized housing, people with disabilities who have the lowest incomes have virtually no chance of having a home of their own.

Federal Measures of Housing Affordability and Housing Needs

Within federal housing policy, housing affordability and the need for housing assistance are measured primarily by the percentage of income that a low-income household pays each month for housing costs, including utilities. As the percentage of household income used for housing goes up, the household's ability to afford that housing goes down.

This "income-to-rent" affordability comparison is also used by the federal government to determine the relative need for housing assistance among all low-income households and to identify "worst case" housing

needs. Under current federal guidelines, housing is considered affordable for a low-income household when the cost of monthly rent plus utilities does not exceed 30 percent of monthly household income.

Low-income households that pay between 31 and 50 percent of their income toward housing costs are considered to be "rent burdened" by the federal government. When the percentage spent on housing costs exceeds 50 percent of monthly income, low-income households are considered to be "severely" rent burdened and have "worst case" needs for housing assistance.

Priced Out in 2002 Methodology

P*riced Out in 2002*: (1) assesses housing affordability for people with disabilities receiving SSI across the United States in 2002; and (2) compares the 2002 data with data from *Priced Out in 2000* to determine whether the housing affordability gap for people with disabilities is better or worse than it was two years ago. To complete this assessment, five separate data sets from 2002 were used:

1. The HUD Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program effective October 1, 2002. A housing unit at the Fair Market Rent is meant to be modest, not luxurious, costing less than the typical unit of that bedroom size in that city or county;
2. 2002 median incomes for one-person households in each housing market area from HUD USER, a HUD information website;
3. 2002 SSI rates for individuals with disabilities living independently from the U.S. Social Security Administration. The SSI rate is made up of the federal SSI payment of \$545 in 2002, plus the optional state supplements in the 24 states that uniformly provide a state-determined, state-funded additional amount to all SSI recipients who live independently in the community. [NOTE: Some states provide SSI supplements for people with specific types of disabilities and/or people with disabilities residing in specific housing arrangements (such as congregate living or structured residential settings). Only those supplements uniformly applied to all people with disabilities living independently in the community were included as part of the analysis];
4. The Housing Wage computed by the National Low Income Housing Coalition as part of their 2002 publication, *Out of Reach: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity* (see page 8 for more information); and
5. Renter household information also provided by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Data included in *Priced Out in 2002* have been weighted to reflect the number of renter households residing in each housing market area of the country in order to provide the most accurate information possible.

People with disabilities who have the lowest incomes have virtually no chance of having a home of their own.

Table 1: Percent of SSI Benefits Needed to Rent a One-Bedroom Housing Unit

State	2002 Average	State	2002 Average	State	2002 Average
Alabama	74.1%	Kentucky	73.4%	North Dakota	73.6%
Alaska	72.8%	Louisiana	79.0%	Ohio	88.7%
Arizona	108.6%	Maine	90.1%	Oklahoma	67.1%
Arkansas	68.6%	Maryland	134.5%	Oregon	99.6%
California	113.4%	Massachusetts	134.7%	Pennsylvania	95.7%
Colorado	109.2%	Michigan	97.9%	Rhode Island	93.2%
Connecticut	97.8%	Minnesota	95.5%	South Carolina	86.1%
Delaware	111.1%	Mississippi	70.8%	South Dakota	76.6%
District of Columbia	180.6%	Missouri	82.9%	Tennessee	80.8%
Florida	108.8%	Montana	73.3%	Texas	98.3%
Georgia	112.1%	Nebraska	75.2%	Utah	99.2%
Hawaii	133.8%	Nevada	122.0%	Vermont	91.0%
Idaho	68.3%	New Hampshire	113.4%	Virginia	116.8%
Illinois	122.1%	New Jersey	141.9%	Washington	107.4%
Indiana	83.5%	New Mexico	84.8%	West Virginia	69.4%
Iowa	75.9%	New York	129.3%	Wisconsin	75.4%
Kansas	80.0%	North Carolina	93.5%	Wyoming	73.5%
				National Average	105.5%

Percent of SSI Benefits Needed to Rent a One-Bedroom Housing Unit

In 2002, as a national average, people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits needed to pay 105 percent of their monthly income to rent a one-bedroom unit priced at the HUD FMR. This finding – illustrated by state in **Table 1** above – is based on a comparison of state SSI benefit levels (including uniformly applied state supplements to SSI) to HUD Fair Market Rents for one-bedroom units.

In 2002, modest one-bedroom rents in the United States ranged from a low of \$320 in the rural areas of North Dakota to a high of \$1,425 in San Jose, California. Even efficiency unit rents – which ranged from a low of \$257 in rural North Dakota to a high of \$1,250 in San Jose – were not affordable for a person whose only income was SSI.

The state-by-state analysis in **Table 1** finds that in 16 states and the District of Columbia, one-bedroom units renting at the

HUD FMR cost more than 100 percent of monthly SSI income. In four states (Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey) and the District of Columbia, one-bedroom rents were at least 130 percent of monthly SSI benefits and, in the District of Columbia, rents for modest one-bedroom units were almost twice as high as monthly SSI benefits. Even in the most affordable state – which in 2002 was Oklahoma – people with disabilities relying on SSI benefits needed to spend 67 percent of their monthly income for a modest one-bedroom rental unit.

Highest-Cost Housing Market Areas in the United States

In 2002, there were 132 housing market areas in the United States with average rents for one-bedroom units above 100 percent of monthly SSI benefit levels – 9 more than the 123 high-cost areas identified in *Priced Out in 2000*. In 17 of the

country's highest-cost housing market areas, rents for modest one-bedroom units were more than 150 percent of SSI, including the San Francisco area where rents exceeded 200 percent of the monthly SSI benefit amount. These 132 housing market areas include major portions of the states of California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and the entire metropolitan area of Washington, D.C.

SSI and Median Income Comparisons by State

An analysis of SSI benefits by state compared to median incomes shows that the income level of people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits continues to decline when compared to other households. In 2002, SSI benefits were equal to only 18.8 percent of the one-person median income nationally. Since *Priced Out* was first published in 1998, SSI income has declined by 6 percent relative to median income nationally and rental housing costs have risen dramatically. Because SSI income is so much lower than the income of other prospective renters, people with disabilities have virtually no hope of competing in the private housing market for the few low-cost units that are available. **Table 2** provides national and state-by-state data comparing SSI benefits to median incomes.

As shown in Table 2, SSI benefits in many states were lower than 20 percent of the median income for a one-person household. In five states (Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia, the income of a person with a disability receiving SSI was less than 15 percent of the average one-person's income.

SSI and median income comparisons are important for disability housing advocates because federal officials use the median income as a standard to establish housing program policies and eligibility and targeting criteria. For example, most federal housing

In 16 states and the District of Columbia, one-bedroom units renting at the HUD Fair Market Rent cost more than 100 percent of monthly SSI income. In the District of Columbia, rents for modest one-bedroom units were almost twice as high as monthly SSI benefits.

Table 2: SSI Benefits as a Percentage of One-Person Median Income

State	2002 Average	State	2002 Average
Alabama	19.9%	Montana	22.4%
Alaska	28.8%	Nebraska	17.2%
Arizona	18.0%	Nevada	16.2%
Arkansas	23.5%	New Hampshire	16.7%
California	21.1%	New Jersey	13.5%
Colorado	16.2%	New Mexico	21.8%
Connecticut	17.7%	New York	17.5%
Delaware	14.0%	North Carolina	17.5%
District of Columbia	10.2%	North Dakota	20.0%
Florida	18.0%	Ohio	16.6%
Georgia	16.5%	Oklahoma	25.1%
Hawaii	15.9%	Oregon	19.2%
Idaho	22.0%	Pennsylvania	19.1%
Illinois	14.0%	Rhode Island	19.2%
Indiana	16.6%	South Carolina	19.0%
Iowa	17.4%	South Dakota	20.0%
Kansas	17.0%	Tennessee	18.4%
Kentucky	20.7%	Texas	18.2%
Louisiana	23.6%	Utah	17.7%
Maine	22.1%	Vermont	22.1%
Maryland	12.8%	Virginia	14.6%
Massachusetts	17.1%	Washington	15.9%
Michigan	15.8%	West Virginia	25.1%
Minnesota	16.6%	Wisconsin	18.2%
Mississippi	23.2%	Wyoming	20.2%
Missouri	17.7%	National Average	18.8%

assistance programs are targeted to people with incomes at 50 percent of median income and below. In the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, 75 percent of the households assisted must be at or below 30 percent of median income, an income category that includes all people with disabilities who rely on the federal SSI program.

continued on page 8

How to Use the Information in *Priced Out in 2002*

The information in *Priced Out in 2002* can be used by the disability community to document the housing needs of people with disabilities – including the extreme poverty of people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits. Most importantly, *Priced Out in 2002* can be used to prove that people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits cannot afford rental housing – using locally-based HUD Fair Market Rents as the comparison – and that the housing crisis they face is getting worse each year.

The disability community can use the information in this report to engage state and local housing officials in a dialogue about the housing needs of people with disabilities. These housing officials are responsible for developing critical housing strategies that determine how federal housing resources are used in states and localities.

There are four significant housing planning opportunities for disability advocates to influence the use of federal housing resources:

- The Consolidated Plan
- The Public Housing Agency Plan
- The Continuum of Care
- The Qualified Allocation Plan

These federally mandated planning documents control billions of dollars of new federal housing resources that can be used to address the housing crisis currently facing people with disabilities.

Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) is the “master plan” for affordable housing in local communities and states. Each year, Congress appropriates billions of dollars (approximately \$6.6 billion for federal Fiscal Year 2003) that are distributed by HUD directly to all states, most urban counties, and certain “entitlement communities.”

The ConPlan is intended to be a comprehensive, long-range planning document describing housing needs, market conditions, and housing strategies, and outlining an action plan for the use of federal housing funds. The ConPlan is the best chance to go on record about the housing crisis facing people with disabilities in the community or state and demand that people with disabilities receive their “fair share” of federal housing funds distributed through the ConPlan process. The information in *Priced Out in 2002* can be provided to the housing officials preparing the ConPlan, and should be included in the final plan submitted to HUD.

More important than this documentation, however, is the need to convince these housing officials that people with disabilities should be receiving their “fair share” of federal housing funding distributed through the ConPlan process. The information included in *Priced Out in 2002* can help to begin a dialogue that results in more federal housing funding being directed to assist people with disabilities in local communities. To learn more about how the disability community can use the ConPlan process to influence housing officials, see *Piecing It All Together in Your Community: Playing the Housing Game* available online at www.tacinc.org.

Public Housing Agency Plan

New public housing reform legislation enacted in 1998 gave PHAs more flexibility and control over how federal public housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program funds are used in their communities. Along with this flexibility and control came new requirements, including the creation of a new five-year comprehensive planning document known as the Public Housing Agency Plan (PHA Plan). In consultation with a Resident Advisory Board, each PHA is required to complete a PHA Plan that describes the agency’s overall mission for serving low-income and very low-income families, and the activities that will be under-

taken to meet the housing needs of these families. Under federal law, the PHA Plan should also be consistent with the ConPlan for the jurisdiction.

Like the ConPlan, the PHA Plan includes a statement of the housing needs of low- and very low-income people in the community and describes how the PHA's resources – specifically federal public housing and the Section 8 rental assistance programs – will be used to meet these needs. For example, through the PHA Plan, local housing officials could decide to direct more Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program funding to people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits. For more information on the PHA Plan, see issue 8 of *Opening Doors: Affordable Housing in Your Community. What You Need to Know! What You Need to Do!* available online at www.tacinc.org.

Continuum of Care

HUD's third housing plan, the Continuum of Care, documents a community's strategy for addressing homelessness, including a description of what role HUD's McKinney/Vento Homeless Assistance funds play in that strategy. The HUD McKinney/Vento Homeless Assistance programs have formed the backbone of local efforts intended to address the many needs of homeless individuals and families in states and communities across the nation. Unlike the ConPlan and the PHA Plan, which are required by law, the Continuum of Care was created by HUD as a policy to help coordinate the provision of housing and services to homeless people. Since 1994, with the introduction of Continuum of Care planning, communities have been encouraged to envision, organize, and plan comprehensive and long-term solutions to address the problem of homelessness. The strategic planning conducted through this process also forms the basis of a Continuum of Care plan and application to HUD for Homeless Assistance funds.

As with the other HUD housing plans, Continuum of Care planning presents a valuable opportunity for the disability community to provide input regarding the housing and supportive services needs of people with disabilities who are homeless,

including those people who need permanent supportive housing. For more information on the Continuum of Care, see *How to Be A Player in the Continuum of Care* available online at www.tacinc.org.

Qualified Allocation Plan

As with the ConPlan and PHA Plan, when Congress created the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program in 1986, it also included the requirement that states develop a strategic housing document describing how LIHTC funds would be utilized to meet the housing needs and priorities of the state. In accordance with this law, prior to allocating tax credits, each state must develop a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). The QAP outlines the state's affordable housing priorities and how to apply for tax credits. The QAP must be consistent with the state ConPlan and solicit public comment prior to becoming final.

Federal law requires that the QAP give priority to projects that serve the lowest-income households and remain affordable for the longest period of time. In addition, by law, 10 percent of a state's annual LIHTC allocation must be reserved for non-profit organizations.

Some states have additional set-asides within the LIHTC Program to encourage the creation of certain types of housing. For example, some QAPs include a requirement that housing developed with tax credits include a set-aside of units for households with incomes below 30 percent of the median income.

How to Get Your Free Copy of *Priced Out in 2002*

1. Email your name, organization, and postal address to: info@tacinc.org; or
2. Fill out this form and mail it to: TAC, 535 Boylston Street, Suite 1301, Boston, MA 02116-3742. *(Only a limited number of copies will be available free of charge. If more copies are needed, they may be printed from the TAC website at: www.tacinc.org)*

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More Information on the National Low Income Housing Coalition's Housing Wage

The National Low Income Housing Coalition – a national organization dedicated solely to ending America's affordable housing crisis – is committed to educating, organizing, and advocating to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone. As part of this commitment, the National Low Income Housing Coalition annually publishes *Out of Reach*, a rental housing cost analysis that is similar to the *Priced Out* series but targeted to all low-income households (available online at www.nlihc.org).

Out of Reach contains income and rental housing cost data for the 50 states and the District of Columbia by state, metropolitan area, and county, as well as a Housing Wage

for each of these localities. The concept of the Housing Wage was developed by the National Low Income Housing Coalition to demonstrate what a full-time worker must earn per hour in order to afford rental housing at HUD's Fair Market Rent. Consistent with the approach in *Priced Out*, affordability in the context of the Housing Wage is defined as paying no more than 30 percent of income for rental housing costs. By comparing monthly SSI benefits to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's Housing Wage, housing advocates have an additional tool to illustrate the significant gap between housing costs and income for people with disabilities.

These data provide a strong case that housing assistance – not a modest increase in SSI benefits – is the appropriate solution to the housing affordability problems of people with disabilities receiving SSI.

continued from page 5

Effect of State SSI Supplements

In 2002, 24 states provided a state-funded supplement to SSI benefits. These monthly supplements ranged from as little as \$2 in Oregon to \$362 in Alaska. An analysis of states with these supplements shows that they are not sufficient to make up the housing affordability gap for people receiving SSI. In fact, in 16 of the states that provide a supplement, SSI benefits were still less than 20 percent of the average median income. These data provide a strong case that housing assistance – not a modest increase in SSI benefits – is the appropriate solution to the housing affordability problems of people with disabilities receiving SSI.

It is interesting to note that of those 24 states that provide a supplement to the federal benefits, only five (California, Colorado, Delaware, Nebraska, and Washington) provided a cost-of-living increase to the state supplement between

2000 and 2002. The majority of the state-funded supplement levels decreased or remained constant during this time period.

Increases in SSI Compared to Increases in Housing Costs

Although the economy began to decline in most areas of the country between 2000 and 2002, housing prices continued to rise. **Table 3**, on the next page, compares the rate of growth in SSI benefit amounts to the rate of growth in HUD FMRs from 2000 to 2002. Unfortunately for people with disabilities, the strong rental housing market meant that rents increased dramatically in many housing market areas at a time when SSI cost-of-living increases were much more modest. From 2000 to 2002, rents for one-bedroom units increased 14 percent while SSI benefit levels rose by only 6 percent. In some housing market areas, increases in rental housing costs were six times higher than SSI increases.

As Table 3 indicates, in many areas of the country, cost-of-living adjustments in SSI benefits did not keep pace with the increasing cost of rental housing. In nine states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia, housing costs increased more than 15 percent between 2000 and 2002. The data in Table 3 clearly demonstrate why the housing crisis for people with disabilities is worse today than in 2000 and that the “buying power” of people with disabilities in the rental housing market has continued to decline.

SSI Benefits Compared to the Housing Wage

Since many people with disabilities receiving SSI are not able to work, disability researchers typically do not focus on hourly wage rates. However, given recent changes to federal regulations that provide for greater flexibility in maintaining SSI and Medicaid benefits when employed, hourly wage data has become even more important as a tool for analyzing how little “buying power” a person with a disability receiving SSI – or a person with a disability with a minimum wage job – actually has in the rental housing market.

From 2000 to 2002, rents for one-bedroom units increased 14 percent while SSI benefit levels rose by only 6 percent. In some housing market areas, increases in rental housing costs were six times higher than SSI increases.

Table 3: Increases in SSI Benefits Compared to Increases in Housing Costs

State	Growth in SSI Monthly Payment 2000-2002	Growth in One-Bedroom FMR 2000-2002	State	Growth in SSI Monthly Payment 2000-2002	Growth in One-Bedroom FMR 2000-2002
	% Change	% Change		% Change	% Change
Alabama	6%	6%	Montana	6%	7%
Alaska	4%	6%	Nebraska	7%	6%
Arizona	6%	19%	Nevada	6%	14%
Arkansas	6%	7%	New Hampshire	6%	14%
California	8%	23%	New Jersey	6%	14%
Colorado	14%	17%	New Mexico	6%	10%
Connecticut	0%	12%	New York	6%	9%
Delaware	7%	6%	North Carolina	6%	7%
District of Columbia	6%	34%	North Dakota	6%	9%
Florida	6%	11%	Ohio	6%	10%
Georgia	6%	14%	Oklahoma	6%	12%
Hawaii	6%	1%	Oregon	6%	7%
Idaho	6%	8%	Pennsylvania	6%	10%
Illinois	6%	16%	Rhode Island	6%	6%
Indiana	6%	7%	South Carolina	6%	6%
Iowa	6%	8%	South Dakota	6%	8%
Kansas	6%	11%	Tennessee	6%	7%
Kentucky	6%	9%	Texas	6%	12%
Louisiana	6%	14%	Utah	6%	10%
Maine	6%	9%	Vermont	6%	8%
Maryland	6%	22%	Virginia	6%	18%
Massachusetts	5%	33%	Washington	6%	10%
Michigan	6%	11%	West Virginia	6%	7%
Minnesota	6%	23%	Wisconsin	6%	6%
Mississippi	6%	7%	Wyoming	6%	8%
Missouri	6%	18%	National Average	6%	14%

Table 4: Housing Wage as a Percentage of Hourly SSI Benefits

State	SSI as Hourly Rate	Housing Wage	Housing Wage as % of SSI	State	SSI as Hourly Rate	Housing Wage	Housing Wage as % of SSI
Alabama	\$3.14	\$7.76	247%	Montana	\$3.14	\$7.69	244%
Alaska	\$5.23	\$12.69	243%	Nebraska	\$3.19	\$8.00	251%
Arizona	\$3.14	\$11.39	362%	Nevada	\$3.14	\$12.78	407%
Arkansas	\$3.14	\$7.19	229%	New Hampshire	\$3.30	\$12.48	378%
California	\$4.33	\$16.35	378%	New Jersey	\$3.32	\$15.73	473%
Colorado	\$3.36	\$12.22	364%	New Mexico	\$3.14	\$8.89	283%
Connecticut	\$4.31	\$14.05	326%	New York	\$3.65	\$15.72	431%
Delaware	\$3.17	\$11.75	370%	North Carolina	\$3.14	\$9.80	312%
District of Columbia	\$3.14	\$18.92	602%	North Dakota	\$3.14	\$7.71	245%
Florida	\$3.14	\$11.40	363%	Ohio	\$3.14	\$9.29	296%
Georgia	\$3.14	\$11.75	374%	Oklahoma	\$3.45	\$7.72	224%
Hawaii	\$3.17	\$14.15	446%	Oregon	\$3.15	\$10.47	332%
Idaho	\$3.44	\$7.84	228%	Pennsylvania	\$3.30	\$10.54	319%
Illinois	\$3.14	\$12.80	407%	Rhode Island	\$3.52	\$10.92	311%
Indiana	\$3.14	\$8.75	278%	South Carolina	\$3.14	\$9.03	287%
Iowa	\$3.14	\$7.95	253%	South Dakota	\$3.23	\$8.25	255%
Kansas	\$3.14	\$8.38	267%	Tennessee	\$3.14	\$8.47	269%
Kentucky	\$3.14	\$7.69	245%	Texas	\$3.14	\$10.30	328%
Louisiana	\$3.14	\$8.28	263%	Utah	\$3.14	\$10.40	331%
Maine	\$3.20	\$9.61	300%	Vermont	\$3.48	\$10.57	303%
Maryland	\$3.14	\$14.10	448%	Virginia	\$3.14	\$12.24	389%
Massachusetts	\$3.80	\$17.08	449%	Washington	\$3.25	\$11.64	358%
Michigan	\$3.23	\$10.53	326%	West Virginia	\$3.14	\$7.27	231%
Minnesota	\$3.61	\$11.50	318%	Wisconsin	\$3.63	\$9.11	251%
Mississippi	\$3.14	\$7.42	236%	Wyoming	\$3.20	\$7.85	245%
Missouri	\$3.14	\$8.69	276%	National Average	\$3.43	\$12.08	352%

The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s Housing Wage is the amount of income per hour that full-time workers must earn to have their rental housing costs be affordable – defined as paying no more than 30 percent of income for modest housing. Because the Housing Wage also compares income to rents in a manner similar to *Priced Out*, it can also be used to illustrate the huge gap between SSI incomes and the cost of rental housing.

Table 4 above indicates that, as a national average, the Housing Wage for a low-income person in 2002 to rent an

affordable one-bedroom unit was \$12.08 per hour. Monthly SSI income is equivalent to an hourly rate of only \$3.43 – less than one-third of the Housing Wage. Even in Arkansas – the state with the lowest Housing Wage – the Housing Wage is more than twice SSI benefit levels. This comparison demonstrates that people with disabilities currently receiving SSI would need more than a minimum wage job, but would need to earn over \$12 per hour to afford the rent for a modest one-bedroom rental unit.

Housing Affordability for People with Disabilities in Your Community

By viewing Appendix A of *Priced Out in 2002* online at www.tacinc.org, or by ordering your own copy from TAC using the order form on page 7, people with disabilities, their families, and their advocates can obtain further information regarding housing affordability in their community. Because Appendix A presents rent and income information within a context that is familiar to state and local housing officials, it is also an extremely helpful tool for housing advocacy purposes. It can be used by disability advocates to engage state and local housing officials, and provide specific information on the housing needs of people with disabilities in that housing market area.

As an example of the additional information available in this report, a section of Appendix A has been highlighted below to illustrate the housing affordability problems confronting people with disabilities in the federally defined housing market areas of the State of Massachusetts.

Figure 1 below illustrates that it was virtually impossible for a person with a disability receiving SSI benefits to rent modest housing anywhere in Massachusetts. In 2002, Massachusetts had SSI benefits equal to \$659.39 per month, which included a state-funded supplement of \$114.39. Statewide, this income was equal to only 17.1 percent of the median income. At this income level, a person with a disability receiving SSI in Massachusetts was priced out of the housing market. Specifically, within Massachusetts' 11 federally defined housing market areas the cost of a one-bedroom rental unit ranged from a low of 74.8 percent of SSI benefits in the Pittsfield

In 2002, it was virtually impossible for a person with a disability receiving SSI benefits to rent modest housing anywhere in Massachusetts.

FIGURE 1: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Federal SSI benefit plus the state supplement for people with disabilities living independently in the community

Percent of monthly SSI benefit needed to rent a modest studio apartment at HUD's Fair Market Rent

SSI benefit expressed as an hourly wage for a full-time job

State Statistical Area	SSI Monthly Payment	% SSI for 1-Bedroom	% SSI for Efficiency Apt.	SSI as % Median Income	SSI as an Hourly Rate	Housing Wage
Massachusetts						
Barnstable-Yarmouth	\$659.39	108.0%	80.7%	20.0%	\$3.80	\$13.69
Boston	\$659.39	162.9%	144.5%	15.2%	\$3.80	\$20.65
Brockton	\$659.39	122.7%	93.1%	17.8%	\$3.80	\$15.56
Fitchburg-Leominster	\$659.39	89.2%	63.4%	18.6%	\$3.80	\$11.31
Lawrence	\$659.39	111.2%	92.1%	16.8%	\$3.80	\$14.10
Lowell	\$659.39	126.6%	98.0%	15.0%	\$3.80	\$16.06
New Bedford	\$659.39	104.0%	85.2%	21.7%	\$3.80	\$13.19
Pittsfield	\$659.39	74.8%	52.6%	21.7%	\$3.80	\$9.48
Providence-Fall River-Warwick	\$659.39	84.2%	61.7%	20.1%	\$3.80	\$10.67
Springfield	\$659.39	81.1%	65.5%	21.7%	\$3.80	\$10.29
Worcester	\$659.39	95.4%	79.0%	19.3%	\$3.80	\$12.10
Non-Metropolitan Areas	\$659.39	93.2%	75.5%	21.7%	\$3.80	\$11.82
State Average	\$659.39	134.7%	115.5%	17.1%	\$3.80	\$17.08

Percent of monthly SSI benefit needed to rent a modest one-bedroom apartment at HUD's Fair Market Rent

SSI benefit expressed as a percent of the one-person area median income

Hourly wage that people need to earn to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment at HUD's Fair Market Rent

housing market area to a high of 162.9 percent in the Boston market area. Clearly, it was impossible for people with disabilities receiving SSI to afford modest housing in Massachusetts in 2002.

Conclusion

The findings in *Priced Out in 2002* document extreme housing affordability problems for people with disabilities – problems that have become much worse since the first edition of *Priced Out* was published in 1998. Cost-of-living increases in SSI benefits, state SSI supplements, or even employment at the minimum wage will never be enough to close the housing affordability gap created by the escalating cost of privately owned rental housing in the United States.

For many years, the federal government, as well as many state and local housing officials, have turned their backs on the poorest people with disabilities who need housing assistance in order to have any chance to live in decent housing of their own in the community. This trend

continues in 2003, as federal housing programs are cut so that tax cuts for the most affluent Americans can be implemented.

The findings contained in *Priced Out in 2002* illustrate the deepening housing crisis affecting people with disabilities – and a housing affordability gap that is worse now than it was two years ago. *Priced Out in 2002* should serve as a wake-up call to all federal, state, and local officials who – while acknowledging the nation’s housing and/or chronic homeless problems – fail to make the housing needs and housing affordability problems of people with disabilities a high priority.

As advocates and self-advocates, we must redouble our efforts to change state and federal policies and strengthen our commitment to work with others who share our vision to help those most in need. Collectively, we must continue to help build the political will to change government housing policies, and promote a significant expansion of decent, safe, affordable, accessible, and integrated housing for people with disabilities in every community in the United States.

TAC’s Boston office has moved! We are now located at 535 Boylston St., Suite 1301, Boston, MA 02116. Phone/TTY: (617) 266-5657.

Opening Doors

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