

Opening Doors

A HOUSING PUBLICATION FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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Technical Assistance
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(CCD) Housing Task
Force

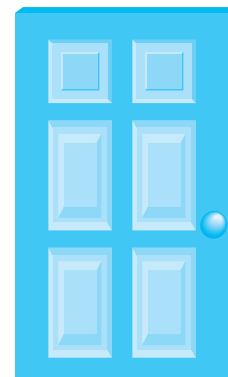
FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of *Opening Doors* is devoted to exploring one of the fundamental barriers faced by people with disabilities in obtaining safe and decent housing – not having enough income. Currently, people with disabilities are literally priced out of every housing market in the United States. The information provided in this issue is based on *Priced Out in 1998*, our recent publication that documents the severity of the housing crisis faced by persons with disabilities receiving Supplemental

Security Income benefits (SSI). The information provided in *Priced Out in 1998* and this issue of *Opening Doors* is critical in convincing federal, state, and local housing officials that creating affordable housing for persons with disabilities (either through the development of more affordable housing or through the availability of rental subsidies) should be a priority for every community's housing strategy.

For the last several years, the

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Survey Documents Housing Crisis for People with Disabilities

OVERVIEW

In every state across the country, people with disabilities are in the midst of an acute and increasing affordable housing crisis. This crisis is the direct result of both the actions and inaction of the federal government, as well as the unwillingness of many local and state housing officials to acknowledge or address the housing needs of people with disabilities. This issue of *Opening Doors* clearly documents the nature and severity of this housing crisis for people with disabilities most in need of housing assistance - the 4,375,650 people with disabilities across the country who receive Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI).

The information provided in this issue of *Opening Doors* is based on *Priced Out in 1998*, a report published by the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. (TAC) and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force (CCD Housing Task Force) in March of 1999. *Priced Out in 1998* explores the most critical aspect of the housing crisis faced by individuals with disabilities who are SSI recipients – the affordability of efficiency (also called studio) and one-bedroom apartments. This is the type of rental unit most sought after by single individuals with disabilities who want to establish a home of their own in the community. *Priced Out in 1998* uses SSI income and

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Opening Doors

To housing opportunities for people with disabilities

Opening Doors is published as a joint effort by the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force, Washington, D.C.

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 Emily Miller, Sarah Gump, or Ann O'Hara, Technical Assistance Collaborative Inc., One Center Plaza, Suite 310, Boston, Massachusetts 02108. Phone: 617-742-5657 or Fax: 617-742-0509 or e-mail: 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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Editorial

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Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force have worked hard to increase the affordable housing resources available to persons with disabilities. Specifically, we have focused our advocacy efforts on producing more rental subsidies targeted to people with disabilities to compensate for the loss of affordable housing units due to "elderly only" housing policies. As a result of this advocacy, and the urging of Congress, HUD has recently agreed to allow non-profit organizations to apply to administer tenant based rental assistance for persons with disabilities through the Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Program. This innovative change creates new opportunities for non-profit organizations serving persons with disabilities to be able to meet all of their needs, including affordable housing!

On March 8, 1999, HUD released the Mainstream Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Applications from qualified non-profit disability organizations and Public Housing Authorities are due to HUD by June 30, 1999. One required component of the Mainstream application is a description of the need for housing for persons with disabilities in your geographic region. The information contained in *Priced Out in 1998* - particularly the state-specific data in Appendix A of the report - can be extremely useful in documenting this need in your community. For further information regarding the Mainstream Program and other funding opportunities visit the TAC web site at www.tacinc.org, and the CCD web site at www.c-c-d.org/funding.htm.

The Editors

Housing Crisis

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federal housing cost data for every state and housing market area in the country to examine the affordability of modest rental housing for people with disabilities, within all 50 states and 2,646 distinct housing market areas of the country.

The major findings of *Priced Out in 1998* clearly document the housing crisis that persons with disabilities receiving SSI currently face. *Priced Out in 1998* documents that:

- People with disabilities receiving SSI benefits are among the lowest income households in the country. The national average income of an individual with a disability receiving SSI is only 24.4 percent of the typical one-person income in the community.
- There is not a single housing market area in the United States where a person with a disability receiving SSI benefits can afford to rent a modest efficiency apartment. This finding is based on current federal housing affordability standards for very low income households, which suggest that no more than 30 percent of monthly income should be spent on housing costs.
- On a national average, the cost of a one-bedroom apartment is 69 percent of SSI monthly income and more than a person's total monthly SSI income in 125 housing market areas of the United States. Using current HUD Fair Market Rents as the standard for modest rental housing costs, nowhere in the United States can an SSI recipient rent a one-bedroom apartment for less than 50 percent of his or her income.
- The national average cost for a modest efficiency apartment is 58.5 percent of SSI monthly income. People with disabilities receiving SSI benefits paying this amount of monthly rent are considered by the federal government to

have a "severe rent burden" and therefore qualify as a household with "worst case" housing needs.

Unfortunately, *Priced Out in 1998* cannot be reproduced in its entirety in this issue of *Opening Doors*. Instead, this issue highlights only the major findings documented in the report — specifically, the extreme poverty of people with disabilities receiving SSI, and the inability of persons receiving SSI benefits to afford rental housing in any housing market area in the United States. However, the complete report, including information specific to your community, can be viewed at www.c-c-d.org/priced_out_in_1998.htm. A limited number of copies of *Priced Out in 1998* are also available by returning the order form on page 12.

THE NEED FOR HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Since the 1980s, the disability community has made it clear that people with disabilities want and need affordable homes of their own in the community. Not only does permanent and affordable housing in the community meet the housing preferences of most people with disabilities - it is also good public policy. Over the past few years, numerous studies have documented the positive outcomes and cost effectiveness associated with permanent and independent housing for people with disabilities. Permanent and affordable community based housing for people with disabilities also helps reduce the stigma and discrimination that often is experienced by people with disabilities who live in larger congregate or group home settings.

Unfortunately, during the 1990s, people with disabilities have had less opportunity to obtain safe and affordable housing in the community. Since 1992,

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FOR MORE
INFORMATION OR
HOUSING FOR
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES
PLEASE CONTACT
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ORGANIZATION LISTED
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federal government policy has intentionally reduced the number of federally subsidized apartments available to people with disabilities under age 62 by permitting federally subsidized housing providers to implement “elderly only” housing policies. Once these housing developments are designated “elderly only”, people with disabilities are no longer eligible to move in, or are only eligible for a small set-aside of units in each project.

These recent changes in federal legislation limiting the number of housing units available to persons with disabilities, combined with the extreme low income of persons on SSI, have made it virtually impossible for them to locate a decent place to live in any state in the country. Unfortunately, we see the effects of this housing crisis everyday. Without affordable housing, people with disabilities continue to live at home with aging parents, in crowded homeless shelters, in institutions or nursing homes, or are forced to choose between seriously substandard housing or paying most of their monthly income for rent.

INCOME AS A BARRIER TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Why do people with disabilities have such difficulty obtaining permanent housing they can afford? The answer is quite simple. Many people with disabilities do not have enough income to be able to rent or buy decent housing without some type of financial assistance. There are obviously other major barriers like stigma and housing discrimination, which exacerbate the problem. However, the elimination of these latter barriers would not address the fact that millions of people with disabilities do not have enough income to obtain their own housing in the community.

Using three government data sets, *Priced Out in 1998* documents that persons with disabilities receiving SSI not only live in extreme poverty and receive an income far below the minimum wage, they also are unable to afford a decent and safe place to live in any of the 50 states. The data sets that were used to reach these conclusions included:

1. HUD Fair Market Rents for the Section 8 rent subsidy program effective October 1, 1998. These rent limits

are based on the cost of modest rental housing and are calculated annually by HUD;

2. Median incomes in 1998 for one-person households in each of HUD housing market areas from HUD USER, a HUD Information web site; and
3. Each state’s 1998 SSI rates for individuals living independently from the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics of the U.S. Social Security Administration. The SSI rate is made up of the federal SSI payment of \$494 in 1998, plus the optional state supplements in the 20 states that provide a state-determined, state-funded additional amount to SSI recipients who live independently.

I. SSI Benefit Income Compared to the Need for Government Housing Assistance

How does the income level of people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits compare when considering other households who are also eligible for housing assistance? It is important to first explore how government officials decide who is eligible for federal housing assistance. This process begins by looking at household income and comparing it to the median income of households within that geographic area. Within this context of median income, there are several income categories below median income that are used by housing officials to measure the relative need for government housing assistance including:

**Low Income Households =
Households with incomes between 50 percent
and 80 percent of area median income**

**Very Low Income Households =
Households with incomes between 30 and
50 percent of area median income**

**Extremely Low Income Households =
Households with incomes below 30 percent
of area median income**

Using these categories, Table 1 illustrates that in 49 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits are in the federal government’s extremely low income category (e.g. below 30 percent of median income). Households with extremely low incomes below 30 percent of median income are considered to be most in need of federal housing assistance, even though other higher income households may also be eligible for federal housing programs.

Table 1: SSI Income as a Percentage of 1-Person Median Income in 1998

STATE	1998 AVERAGE	STATE	1998 AVERAGE
District of Columbia	12.05%	Vermont	23.42%
Hawaii	14.33%	Florida	23.57%
New Jersey	16.35%	Oregon	23.63%
Nevada	16.69%	Pennsylvania	24.23%
Massachusetts	16.98%	Wisconsin	24.25%
Maryland	18.68%	Idaho	24.27%
Delaware	18.97%	New York	24.28%
New Hampshire	19.18%	Arizona	24.32%
Rhode Island	19.91%	Georgia	24.32%
Colorado	20.14%	North Dakota	24.47%
Wyoming	20.42%	South Dakota	24.55%
California	20.62%	Tennessee	24.97%
Utah	21.13%	Minnesota	25.12%
Indiana	21.16%	Texas	25.21%
Iowa	21.37%	Alabama	25.67%
Connecticut	21.67%	Missouri	25.76%
Illinois	21.81%	New Mexico	26.03%
Virginia	22.60%	Alaska	27.33%
Washington	22.79%	Arkansas	27.37%
Montana	22.91%	Kentucky	27.48%
Maine	22.94%	West Virginia	28.52%
Nebraska	22.99%	Louisiana	28.69%
Michigan	23.13%	Mississippi	28.74%
Kansas	23.16%	Oklahoma	29.34%
North Carolina	23.21%	Ohio	31.95%
South Carolina	23.40%	National Average	24.36%

Table 1 lists states in order from the lowest to the highest value of SSI income expressed as a percentage of one-person household median income in 1998. Table 1 documents that SSI benefit income is equal to only 12.05 percent of area median income in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and exceeds 30 percent of median income in only one state - Ohio - where SSI income is equal to 31.95 percent of median income. The national average of SSI benefit income expressed as a percentage of median income is a mere 24.36 percent of median income -- well below the threshold of 30 percent of median income used to define extremely low income households.

The information in Table 1 can be used to clearly document to federal, state, and local housing officials that people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits should be given a priority for whichever government housing assistance is available in local communities. This income-

based documentation of the housing needs of people with disabilities is critically important because:

- Government housing assistance is now targeted to households with a broad income range, including households with incomes as high as 80 percent of median income;
- Housing officials now have great discretion in deciding how to target federal housing assistance; and
- Government housing officials often prefer to allocate limited federal housing funds to higher income households (e.g. above 30 percent of median income) because it costs less to help these households and, in many instances, they are more politically popular to serve.

II. SSI Benefit Income Compared to Minimum Wage Income

Another method to document the extreme poverty of people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits is to compare the value of SSI benefits to the amount of money received by an individual working full time at the 1998 federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour. To illustrate this comparison, the state SSI income levels in Table 2, on page 7, have been converted to the equivalent hourly pay rate for a full-time job at 40 hours a week.

Table 2 documents that as a national average, SSI benefit income is equal to an hourly wage rate of only \$3.22 per hour, which was the approximate minimum hourly wage in 1980. In 49 of the 50 states, people with disabilities receiving SSI income benefits have less income than individuals working full time at the 1998 minimum wage. In fact, in the 30 states (and the District of Columbia) that do not add a state supplement to the federal SSI payment, SSI income is equal to only 60 percent of the income earned by a minimum wage worker. Only in Alaska, Ohio, and Connecticut, which have the highest state SSI supplements in the country, does the value of monthly SSI income even approach minimum wage income levels.

The information in Table 2 can be used by people with disabilities and their advocates to illustrate that people with disabilities are at more of a disadvantage than people earning minimum wage when evaluating the income they have to pay for housing in the community. Table 2 is helpful because low-income people with

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How to Use this Information

The information provided in this issue can be used to engage federal, state, and local affordable housing officials in a dialogue about the need to develop and fund more affordable housing resources to assist people with disabilities to rent or own homes of their own. Specifically, the disability community can utilize these facts to clearly document the housing needs of people with disabilities - including the extreme poverty of people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits. Most importantly, the data proves that people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits cannot afford rental housing, using locally based HUD Fair Market Rents as the comparison.

THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND THE NEW PUBLIC HOUSING PLAN

The disability community can immediately be involved and have a voice in the development of local and state housing and community development strategic plans. In recent years, in exchange for more local decision-making and control, the federal government imposed new requirements on states and local communities - including the development of two five-year comprehensive housing strategies, the Consolidated Plan and the newly mandated Public Housing Agency Plan. When developing these housing strategies, states, communities, and Public Housing Agencies are required to assess the housing needs of all low-income households, including people with disabilities. This assessment includes input from citizens and consultation with the public and private agencies that provide assistance and support to people with disabilities and their families. Ideally, this housing needs assessment then forms the basis for the decisions made by state and local officials regarding how federal housing funding should be spent.

Because HUD requires that existing five year Consolidated Plans be revised within the next year, and that both the Consolidated Plan and the Public Housing Agency Plan be updated annually, it is never too late to influence the development of the next strategic plan in your locality or state. The disability community should take advantage of this opportunity to influence how state and local officials describe the housing needs of people with disabilities. In addition, the disability community can use the Consolidated

Plan process to request federal block grant or formula grant funding to expand affordable housing opportunities for people with disabilities.

Recently, the Secretary of HUD issued guidance to the HUD field offices, emphasizing the importance of involving persons with disabilities and their advocates in the development of the Consolidated Plan. This letter stated:

Many jurisdictions have already made efforts to reach out to persons with disabilities and to advisory boards, task forces, and advocacy organizations. Those efforts have resulted in a fuller understanding of not only the needs, but the contributions of persons with disabilities to our communities.

It is critical that persons with disabilities and their housing needs be fully considered in every jurisdiction we serve. To do so, we must reach out to persons with disabilities and their chosen advocates and hear their perspectives. I want to remind you that each jurisdiction is required to (1) include persons with disabilities in the Consolidated Plan development process and (2) include data regarding the housing needs of persons with disabilities.

We are committed to addressing the housing needs of communities through a holistic approach, which includes persons with disabilities, physical, mental, and emotional. Thank you in advance for ensuring that the needs of this population are given full consideration and attention in the Consolidated Plans of the communities you serve.

People with disabilities, their families, and advocates must learn to use the tools that have been provided within in federal law. This includes using the right to participate in the Consolidated Plan and Public Housing Plan processes at both the state and local level, as well as the utilization of protections provided within the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988, in order to engage and influence government housing officials. Using these federal requirements as leverage, the disability community can begin to persuade federal, state, and local housing officials to address the acute housing crisis which prevents people with disabilities from having affordable homes of their own in communities all across the country. ■

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disabilities are competing for scarce housing resources with other groups eligible for federal housing assistance – including low income working households and elderly households. These groups typically have more household income than people with disabilities do – a trend that is expected to continue.

In fact, data maintained by HUD indicates that the average income of elderly households receiving federal public housing assistance in 1997 was \$8,614 – \$2,686 more income per year than the annual federal SSI benefit level of \$5,928. Yet people with disabilities still must compete with elderly households for the limited number of efficiency and one-bedroom apartments that remain available to both groups and for scarce Section 8 rental subsidies.

The data proves that people with severe disabilities confront a “no-win” situation when trying to find housing in the community because:

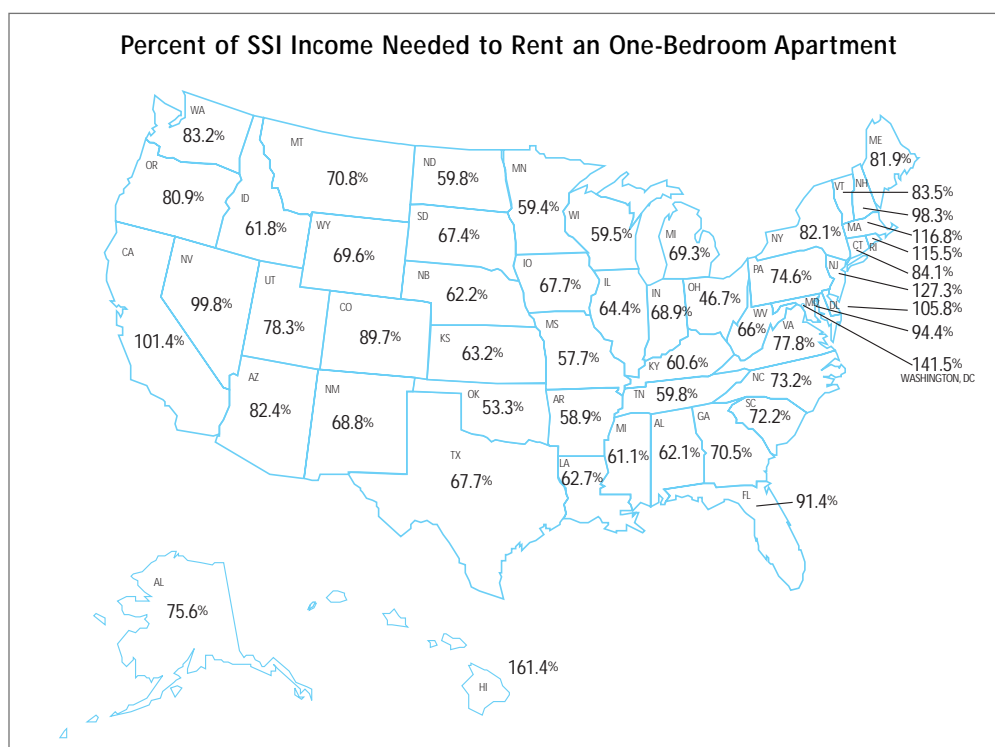
- SSI benefit levels are much too low to pay for the cost of housing;
- The supply of federally subsidized housing units that people with disabilities were eligible to live in has declined because of “elderly only” housing policies; and
- There are very few resources being made available by HUD, or by PHAs and other government housing officials, to make up for the loss of housing which has occurred since 1992.

Unfortunately, the crisis that confronts people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits is not well understood by federal, state, and local housing officials. Currently, HUD has no policy to replace the subsidized housing resources lost to people with disabilities when housing becomes “elderly only”. Neither does HUD have a

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Table 2: SSI Income Expressed as an Hourly Rate

STATE	AVERAGE	STATE	AVERAGE
Alabama	\$3.09	Tennessee	\$3.09
Arkansas	\$3.09	Texas	\$3.09
Arizona	\$3.09	Utah	\$3.09
California	\$3.09	Virginia	\$3.09
Colorado	\$3.09	West Virginia	\$3.09
District of Columbia	\$3.09	Hawaii	\$3.12
Delaware	\$3.09	Nebraska	\$3.14
Florida	\$3.09	Washington	\$3.14
Georgia	\$3.09	Wyoming	\$3.15
Iowa	\$3.09	Maine	\$3.15
Illinois	\$3.09	Michigan	\$3.18
Indiana	\$3.09	South Dakota	\$3.18
Kansas	\$3.09	New Hampshire	\$3.26
Kentucky	\$3.09	Pennsylvania	\$3.26
Louisiana	\$3.09	New Jersey	\$3.28
Massachusetts	\$3.09	Idaho	\$3.39
Maryland	\$3.09	Oklahoma	\$3.42
Missouri	\$3.09	Vermont	\$3.43
Mississippi	\$3.09	Rhode Island	\$3.49
Montana	\$3.09	Minnesota	\$3.59
North Carolina	\$3.09	Wisconsin	\$3.61
North Dakota	\$3.09	New York	\$3.63
New Mexico	\$3.09	Connecticut	\$4.67
Nevada	\$3.09	Ohio	\$4.69
Oregon	\$3.09	Alaska	\$5.35
South Carolina	\$3.09	National Average	\$3.22



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strategy to facilitate access by people with disabilities to Section 8 rent subsidies or other federal housing resources controlled by state and local housing officials. And there is no federal government policy presently underway to increase SSI benefits to the level of federally mandated minimum wages.

III. Affordability of Housing for People with Disabilities Receiving SSI Benefit Income

Within the housing industry, the issue of affordability and need for housing assistance is measured primarily by the percentage of income that the household must pay each month for housing costs. The higher the percentage of household income paid for housing, the less affordable that housing becomes for that household. The federal

government uses these measures to determine the relative need for housing assistance among all low-income households.

Under current federal guidelines, housing is considered affordable when the cost of monthly rent plus utilities does not exceed 30 percent of monthly household income. Under most federal housing programs, subsidized tenants are not permitted to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs. Low-income households paying between 30 percent and 50 percent of their monthly income for housing are considered by the federal government to have a rent burden.

Once housing costs go above 50 percent of household monthly income, the federal government considers the household to have a "severe" rent burden and have "worst case" needs for housing assistance. In the private rental housing market, responsible landlords will usually not rent an apartment to a household if the monthly rent is more than 50 percent of the prospective tenant's monthly income.

Using the federal 30 percent rent to income standard, current data document that people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits cannot afford to rent a modestly priced efficiency or studio apartment in any state in the country. Table 3 illustrates this fact by comparing state SSI income levels to 1998 HUD Fair Market Rent levels for efficiency apartments. HUD Fair Market Rent levels are an excellent measure of housing costs locally because they are intended to indicate the cost of modest rental housing in distinct housing market areas of the country, and are updated annually.

Table 3 indicates that in 42 states and the District of Columbia, people with disabilities must pay between 50 percent

Table 3: Percent of SSI Income Needed to Rent an Efficiency Apartment

STATE	1998 AVERAGE	STATE	1998 AVERAGE
Ohio	39.30%	Michigan	61.10%
Oklahoma	46.63%	Virginia	61.83%
Nebraska	48.49%	South Carolina	62.07%
North Dakota	48.82%	Alaska	62.56%
Minnesota	48.99%	North Carolina	63.27%
Missouri	49.87%	Utah	64.31%
Arkansas	50.67%	Connecticut	65.97%
Wisconsin	50.72%	Vermont	66.79%
Tennessee	51.43%	Oregon	67.28%
South Dakota	51.67%	Washington	69.15%
Kentucky	51.73%	Maine	69.52%
Mississippi	51.80%	New York	70.07%
Alabama	53.01%	Arizona	75.46%
Idaho	53.24%	Maryland	78.31%
Iowa	54.74%	New Hampshire	79.33%
West Virginia	54.90%	Nevada	80.35%
Kansas	55.86%	Florida	81.45%
Illinois	56.33%	Colorado	82.31%
Louisiana	56.89%	California	85.93%
Texas	58.53%	Delaware	91.03%
Georgia	58.81%	Massachusetts	94.89%
Pennsylvania	59.10%	Rhode Island	96.36%
New Mexico	59.95%	New Jersey	105.40%
Wyoming	60.07%	Hawaii	123.72%
Indiana	60.09%	District of Columbia	124.49%
Montana	61.06%	National Average	58.49%

and 100 percent of their income to live in a modest efficiency apartment. In New Jersey, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia, people with disabilities receiving SSI need to pay more than their entire monthly SSI income in order to rent a modest efficiency apartment. Even in Ohio, the least expensive state, a person with a disability must spend 39.30 percent of SSI income for this type of rental housing. Only six states (Ohio, Oklahoma, Nebraska, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Missouri) have modest efficiency apartments that cost less than 50 percent of monthly SSI income.

The information in Table 3 is important to use in discussions with government housing officials to accurately measure the difficulty that people with disabilities have in accessing any decent and affordable housing. It is clearly shown that people with disabilities with SSI incomes have difficult choices to make when shopping for housing in the rental housing market. At best, they must either take on a “severe” rent burden, or rent substandard housing that is more affordable. If they can find rental housing at all, people with disabilities are very likely to be paying more than 50 percent of their income to rent a unit that is also very substandard. HUD documented this fact in its *Worst Case Housing Needs Report* submitted to the Congress in 1994, which described that people with disabilities are the low-income group most likely to have these “multiple” housing problems.

Table 4 is similar to Table 3, except that it measures the affordability of one-bedroom apartments, rather than efficiency apartments, for people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits. This table illustrates that in 49 of the 50 states, people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits must pay more than 50 percent of their SSI income

to rent a modest one-bedroom apartment. In 26 states and the District of Columbia, the percentage of SSI income needed rises to 70 percent or more. In 6 states (California, Delaware, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Hawaii) and the District of Columbia, the amount of income needed to rent a modest one-bedroom apartment actually exceeds the entire monthly income of a person receiving SSI benefits. Hawaii is the most expensive state, with 161.35 percent of monthly SSI income needed to rent a one-bedroom apartment.

Table 4: Percent of SSI Income Needed to Rent a One-Bedroom Apartment

State	Average	State	Average
Ohio	46.74%	South Carolina	72.18%
Oklahoma	53.31%	North Carolina	73.20%
Missouri	57.67%	Pennsylvania	74.55%
Arkansas	58.89%	Alaska	75.56%
Minnesota	59.39%	Virginia	77.82%
Wisconsin	59.53%	Utah	78.52%
Tennessee	59.80%	Oregon	80.87%
North Dakota	59.83%	Maine	81.85%
Kentucky	60.60%	New York	82.08%
Mississippi	61.14%	Arizona	82.39%
Idaho	61.77%	Washington	83.23%
Alabama	62.11%	Vermont	83.51%
Nebraska	62.18%	Connecticut	84.06%
Louisiana	62.70%	Colorado	89.71%
Kansas	63.18%	Florida	91.40%
Illinois	64.39%	Maryland	94.36%
West Virginia	66.01%	New Hampshire	98.27%
South Dakota	67.43%	Nevada	99.81%
Iowa	67.68%	California	101.37%
Texas	67.74%	Delaware	105.80%
New Mexico	68.80%	Rhode Island	115.46%
Indiana	68.87%	Massachusetts	116.79%
Michigan	69.31%	New Jersey	127.34%
Wyoming	69.64%	District of Columbia	141.50%
Georgia	70.46%	Hawaii	161.35%
Montana	70.76%	National Average	69.01%

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In 1998, there was not one county or metropolitan area in the United States where a person receiving SSI benefits could actually follow federal guidelines for housing affordability and pay only 30 percent of their monthly income in rent. Instead, on a national average, it takes almost 70 percent of SSI income plus extreme self-discipline and self-denial of other needs such as food, transportation, clothing, and other essentials for a person with a disability receiving SSI benefits to rent a one-bedroom apartment in the United States. After paying the rent, only about \$5.00 per day remains for these other expenses.

IV. Housing Affordability for Persons with Disabilities in Your Community

By viewing Appendix A of *Priced Out in 1998* on the web, or by ordering your own copy using the form on page 12, people with disabilities, their families, and their advocates can obtain further information regarding housing affordability in their community. As an example of the additional information available in this report, a section of Appendix A has been high-

lighted to illustrate the housing affordability problems confronting people with disabilities in the State of New Jersey.

New Jersey has one of the highest priced rental housing markets in the United States. People with disabilities receiving SSI were literally “priced out” of the rental housing market in New Jersey in 1998. Statewide, a person with a disability had an income equal to only 16.4 percent of median income for the state. This income was equal to an hourly wage of \$3.28. [Note: New Jersey SSI recipients living independently received \$525 per month from SSI, which included a \$31 supplement paid by the state.]

At this income level, a person with a disability receiving SSI in New Jersey would need to pay statewide, on average, 105.4 percent of his or her monthly income to rent a modest efficiency apartment, and 127.3 percent of monthly income to rent a one-bedroom apartment. Within the state’s eight federally defined housing market areas illustrated above, the cost of a one-bedroom rental unit ranges from a low of 105.7 percent of SSI in the Atlantic-Cape May Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area to a high of 146.4 percent in the Middlesex-Somerset-Hunter housing market area.

To find further information regarding the affordability of housing within your state or community for people with disabilities receiving SSI benefits, you may review *Priced Out in 1998* on the web at www.c-c-d.org/priced_out_in_1998.htm

Housing Affordability in the State of New Jersey

Metropolitan Statistical Area	SSI Monthly Payment	SSI as % of Median Income	SSI as an Hourly Rate	% SSI for Efficiency Apt	% SSI for 1-Bedroom
New Jersey					
Atlantic-Cape May	\$525	19.5%	\$3.28	92.9%	105.7%
Bergen-Passaic	\$525	13.8%	\$3.28	117.1%	142.6%
Jersey City	\$525	18.8%	\$3.28	107.6%	126.8%
Middlesex-Somerset-Hunter	\$525	12.9%	\$3.28	133.7%	146.4%
Monmouth-Ocean	\$525	15.9%	\$3.28	110.0%	131.9%
Newark	\$525	14.3%	\$3.28	101.5%	129.7%
Trenton	\$525	14.7%	\$3.28	90.8%	126.6%
Vineland-Millville-Bridge	\$525	20.9%	\$3.28	89.7%	109.1%
State Average	\$525	16.4%	\$3.28	105.4%	127.3%

CONCLUSION

The sobering statistics represented in this issue of *Opening Doors* document the severity of the housing affordability problem for people with disabilities in every part of the United States. Simply put, the millions of people with disabilities who receive SSI benefits are too poor to obtain safe and affordable housing unless they have some type of housing assistance. Without a housing subsidy, people with disabilities have very little hope of obtaining decent housing in the community. Responsible landlords and housing management companies begin screening out prospective tenants when they have to spend 40 percent of their income on rent, and very rarely accept a tenant who must pay more than 50 percent of income for rent. A SSI recipient rejected for housing on the basis of income has little recourse since he or she is really not being discriminated against on the basis of disability, but rather on the basis of income.

During the 1990s, the federal government has exacerbated this housing crisis by permitting the conversion of hundreds of thousands of subsidized units to "elderly only" housing. HUD budget cuts have also had a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities. For example, since 1995, HUD's Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program's funding has been reduced by 50 percent, while funding for most other HUD programs has increased. Federal programs that can be used to create new affordable housing (such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, the Community Development Block Grant program, and the HOME program) are generally used by state and local officials

to develop housing for households with incomes above 40 percent of median income. This income level's well above the 24 percent of median income level of SSI benefits nationally.

Fortunately, key members of the Congress have taken on the cause of housing for people with disabilities, and over the past three years have appropriated \$130 million in new funding for Section 8 rental subsidies targeted exclusively to people with disabilities. However, these funds will only support approximately 20,000 new rent subsidies - less than 10 percent of the 273,000 units of housing that may be converted to "elderly only" by the year 2000. It is clear that the federal government must appropriate new housing funds and develop new housing policies to respond to the housing crisis confronting people with disabilities and the impact of "elderly only" housing policies.

Without more federal funding and major changes in federal housing policy, HUD's budget will continue to favor other groups eligible for housing assistance. The federal government must redirect its housing policies, programs, and resources to ensure that people with disabilities, who have the lowest incomes of any group eligible for federal housing assistance, are not priced out of the housing market in the year 2000 and beyond. Federal, state, and local officials must be convinced that creating housing that is affordable to people with disabilities - either through a rent subsidy or through housing production - is a priority for every community's housing strategy. The housing affordability information provided in this issue of *Opening Doors* can help convince government officials that they must act now! ■

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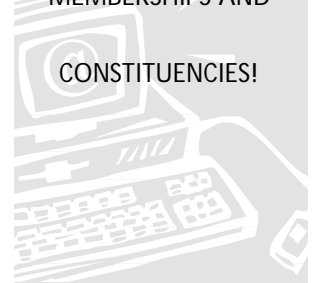
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Priced Out in 1998

The Housing Crisis for People with Disabilities

The report is available in its entirety on-line at:
www.c-c-d.org/priced_out_in_1998.htm

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