

SECTION 3: WHERE WILL MY FAMILY MEMBER LIVE?

Where we call “home” is key to our identity, lifestyle, and quality of life. With good planning, “home” can be a place that helps us move along the path to the good things in life. If not thoughtfully, planned, however, it can get in the way of those good things.

Older caregivers have often provided a good home for many years for their family member with a disability. Caregivers can gain peace of mind by learning about options and resources and taking steps now to prepare everyone for the time when the primary caregiver/s can no longer be engaged as they are now.

Just like building a personal network, planning for where your family member will live takes time. Caregivers can use this section of the Letter of Intent, along with the information and conversation during Session Three of the Future is Now series to begin that journey.

Living Together Safely and Well for As Long as it Works

Many caregivers hope to continue to live with their family member with a disability for as long as they can do so safely and with quality of life. For older caregivers, this means paying attention to their *own* changing life situation and addressing issues that arise because of their own aging process. Sometimes the older caregiver can get services or supports that make it possible for the family to stay together longer.

Caregivers age 60 and older may be eligible for a range of services that help them stay at home. Some caregivers may be able to purchase goods and service, others may be eligible to receive these service at no cost. Some services that aging caregivers find useful include home modifications to improve accessibility, using remote technology like fall alert devices, meal delivery, and homemaker services.

The Council on Aging of Southwest Ohio is the ‘front door’ for aging services in the Southwest Ohio region. You can get information about services and supports that might help you live safely and well in your own home for as long as possible. You can reach the Council on Aging at www.help4seniors.org or by calling [\(513\) 721-1025](tel:5137211025).

The Council on Aging offers an extensive Resource Guide on their website. This is one way to get ideas about the range of resources available. They also offer an intake and referral service designed to help you find what you need.

If your family member has an SSA, you might also ask the SSA for ideas and information about services that might be available in your area for older caregivers.



USE TECHNOLOGY: Sometimes older caregivers and the family member with a disability can use technology to stay safe and live well. A range of assistance devices are available to help manage everyday tasks and increase safety and security.

- Click here to see a video about using technology:
<https://restassuredsystem.com/videos>.
- Also see the handout “Smart homes’ top job: safety”.
- If the family member with a disability has a waiver, talk with your SSA (Service and Support Administrator) about using the waiver for remote technology services.

MODIFY YOUR HOME: There are lots of ways to modify homes so that they are safer and more functional for the family member with a disability and/or the aging caregiver. Some resources include:

- If you live in Hamilton County (outside the City of Cincinnati) there are resources available to support some modifications. For more information, contact Debbie Greenebaum, Housing Specialist at Hamilton County DD Services
[aDebbie.Greenebaum@hamiltondds.org](mailto:Debbie.Greenebaum@hamiltondds.org)
- People Working Cooperatively (PWC) offers home modifications and home repairs. They have a storefront located at 4612 Paddock Road, Cincinnati, where you can view a range of home modification options (e.g. adapted bathtubs) Phone: 513-351-7921 or website:
<http://www.pwchomerepairs.org>
- People with disabilities who have waivers through Hamilton County DD Services may be able to get help with home modifications. Contact your SSA.

Using Vouchers and Stable Accounts to help pay the cost of rent

- Vouchers are issued by the Metropolitan Housing Authority. If a landlord agrees to accept a voucher, the person’s rent is reduced. This makes housing more affordable. (See handout “Vouchers: What and How”)
- STABLE Accounts can help maximize housing options (see handout)

Using Medicaid Waivers to pay for services

- Waivers are one way get the services a person needs to live safely and well. There are several different waivers – each funds a particular set of services. See “Comparing DODD Waivers”. Contact your county board for more information. There are waiting lists for waivers in most counties. Counties have a “priority wait list” that allows people in some situations to become priority for waiver services (see handout)
- The Individual Options waiver has the highest cap and is often used for people who need more supports.
- If your family member has an Individual Options (IO) Waiver, one option that makes it possible for your family member to live in a family home (instead of a staffed residence) is Ohio Shared Living. For more information see OhioSharedLiving.com and/or ask your county board for more information.

Imagining the Future: What Does a Good Home Look Like?



One of the important first steps is to create a picture of what a good home might look like for your family member when they are no longer living the primary caregiver/s. When you know what a good home looks like, and can share those ideas with other people, then there's a better chance that the good home will happen.

Use the space below to capture important ideas about "What a Good Home Looks Like". Be sure to include the ideas and preferences of your family member with a disability. If your family member has completed an exercise like this in conjunction with the Future is Now series, then please reflect that information as well. Sometimes people don't use words, but tell us through their actions and behavior what is important to them. Include these ideas as well.



Think about the physical environment

Does your family member need a barrier-free (accessible) floor plan? Is outdoor space a priority?



Think about location

Does the neighborhood or area of the home matter? Why does this matter? If the home isn't in this location, what adjustments or assistance will be necessary?



Think about people that your family member might live with

Might your family member prefer to share a home with a person or family (without a disability) that provides a place to live and offers assistance or live with a roommate(s) with a disability and receive staff support?



What else comes to mind when you consider: "What a good home looks like?"



Update the information about “What a good home looks like” as you learn more, and as you get clearer on what a good means to your family member.

REFLECTING ON ‘WHAT A GOOD HOME LOOKS LIKE’

One of the most important steps you can take is to talk with other family members and allies about your hopes for the future living situation of your family member with a disability. If your family member has an Individual Options (IO) Waiver, or will likely have one if an emergency arises, then paid support staff can provide the necessary day-to-day supports. In these situations, the role of these family members and allies is to help assure that the ideas outlined in this Letter of Intent are honored as much as possible. They can be active members of the personal network of support.

Learning all the information about options and opportunities can be a daunting task. One way to learn this information in more manageable chunks is to attend quarterly Home Think Tank sessions hosted by Hamilton County DD Services. Information is on the web page www.hamiltondds.org or contact Debbie Greenebaum, Housing Specialist at Hamilton County DD Services at Debbie.Greenebaum@hamiltondds.org

Use the space below to outline a few steps you can take to learn what you need to know about planning for housing:

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:

Use the space below to name a few people you can talk with about the ideas you’ve developed so far:

- 1:
- 2:
- 3: