



Action Request

Require the development of new state regulations for adult family homes specific to serving people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). Address barriers that are inhibiting the development of this important housing option.

Critical Shortage of Community-Based Housing

There is a crisis in the growing need for community-based housing for 13,130 adults with I/DD statewide enrolled in the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) system who live at home with their parents.¹ Individuals with I/DD living with aging parents will need access to secure affordable and supportive housing. When a family can no longer care for these individuals, they may be at risk for homelessness.

One housing option is the use of Adult Family Homes (AFH), which are residential homes licensed to provide personal care, specialty care, necessary supervision, and room and board for up to six adults who need long-term care. This housing option provides adults with I/DD the ability to reside in their communities and live as independently as possible.

In Washington State, there are 1,701 people with I/DD living in AFHs², but there are barriers that must be addressed to ensure that these AFHs remain a viable housing option.

Recognize Differences Between AFHs Serving Individuals with I/DD and Those That Serve the Senior Population

State regulations for AFHs do not distinguish between the unique and vastly different housing needs of senior citizens and individuals with I/DD. The majority of AFHs in Washington serve senior citizens who need hands-on personal care as they approach the end of their lives; the current rates, licensing and training requirements support this medical model. However, the needs of younger

adults with I/DD are very different. Unlike the senior population, a move to an AFH for the I/DD population is most often a step of growth and independence. An intentional approach to AFHs for the I/DD population would improve the resident's quality of life and increase length of stay, thus providing stability.

New State Regulations to Support AFHs That Serve People with I/DD are Needed

The current state regulations for AFHs are intended for the senior population and do not fit the I/DD population. New regulations are required that promote the development of more AFHs specializing in serving individuals with I/DD and preserve existing AFHs serving this population.

Second Substitute Senate Bill (2SSB) 5672 was passed last session and directed State DDA to work with stakeholders to design and implement services for individuals living in AFHs that exclusively serve individuals with a primary need of care related to developmental disabilities. Stakeholder recommendations need to be taken under consideration to support increasing the number of AFHs that specialize in serving adults with I/DD.

Relevant and applicable provisions for AFHs that support the needs of people with I/DD would streamline the development of AFHs, reduce the need for institutional settings, and attract more providers to create these greatly needed resources.

Enact improvements to state regulations that encourage the development of new, or preservation of existing, AFHs that specialize in serving adults with I/DD.

¹ State DSHS/DDA CARE System on 7/1/2019

² Ibid.