



Action Request

Update the development of state regulations for adult family homes specific to serving people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). Existing regulations inhibit 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 more than 12,000 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 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), a residential home licensed to care for up to six non-related residents. AFHs provide room, board, necessary supervision, necessary help with activities of daily living, personal care, and social services. 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 over 1,600 people with I/DD living in AFHs, but there are barriers that must be addressed to ensure that these AFHs remain a viable housing option.²

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. It is important to update state regulations to distinguish between the unique needs of seniors and I/DD populations to ensure resident rights.

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

¹ DSHS/DDA Care System. Accessed on 1 July 2018.

² Ibid.