

HUD Releases 2009 Worst Case Housing Needs of People with Disabilities

One Million Very Low Income Non-Elderly Renter Households Have Worst Case Needs

Summary

For the past decade, the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force (CCD) have urged the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to improve disability data included in its reports on worst case housing need. During that time, HUD developed several worst case housing needs reports for Congress which significantly understated the housing needs of very low income non-elderly adults with disabilities who rent their housing.

TAC and CCD are gratified that on March 24, 2011, HUD'S Office of Policy Development and Research issued *Worst Case Housing Needs of People with Disabilities* – a supplement to HUD's *Worst Case Housing Needs 2009: Report to Congress* (February 2011) – which significantly improves previous estimates of need among renter households that contain very low income non-elderly adults with disabilities. This HUD supplemental report states that in 2009, approximately 1 million very low income renter households that included non-elderly adults with disabilities had worst case needs.

TAC and CCD will continue to work collaboratively with HUD to improve federal data on the housing needs of non-elderly adults with disabilities, including those who are living in institutional and non-institutional group quarters (such as nursing homes, public institutions, and homeless shelters) and who are not included in housing needs estimates of very low income renter households.

Background

HUD has estimated worst case housing needs data since 1985 using data from the American Housing Survey (AHS). Worst case housing needs households are defined by HUD as very-low-income renter households who do not receive government housing assistance and who either pay more than one-half of their income for rent or live in severely inadequate housing conditions or both.

Until 2009, the AHS did not include any direct questions about disability. Instead, HUD used "proxies" to identify disability. A proxy is data that is a "stand-in" for data that is not available. HUD's proxy was assistance payments that consider disability in some fashion in granting eligibility. As a result of the use of proxies rather than direct questions, the HUD's reports historically undercounted the number of non-elderly adult households with disabilities with worst case needs.

The 2009 survey is the first time the AHS used direct questions to measure whether a household included a person with a disability. The Survey asked six questions about disability including questions about hearing, vision, memory, walking and climbing, dressing and bathing and doing errands alone.

Report Summary

The HUD Supplementary Report released on March 24th found that:

- In 2009, approximately 1 million very low income renter households that included non-elderly adults with disabilities had worst case needs;
- Renter households that include non-elderly adults with disabilities are more likely than those that don't include people with disabilities to have very low incomes, experience worst case housing needs, pay more than one-half of their income for rent, and have other housing problems such as living in inadequate or overcrowded housing;
- Between 2007 and 2009, there was a 13 percent increase in worst case needs households that included non-elderly adults with disabilities. This is a lower increase than among very-low-income renters as a whole (20%).
- Renter households with non-elderly adults disabilities were almost one and one-half times more likely to pay more than one-half of their income for rent than renter households without disabilities
- Compared to other very low income renter households, nonelderly adult households with disabilities are more likely to:
 - Be very low-income (66% compared to 46%);
 - Have worst case housing needs (25% to 19%);and
 - Have severe rent burden (34% to 24%), i.e. paying 50% or more of the household income for rent.
- Nonelderly adult renters with disabilities were less likely to have worst case needs than those without disabilities if they lived in central cities (41% compared to 48%) but more likely if they lived in non-metropolitan areas (21% compared to 15%); they were equally likely to have worst case housing needs in suburban areas.

People with Disabilities Living in Institutional and Non-Institutional Group Quarters

For the first time ever, this HUD report clearly states that the data source HUD uses to prepare worst case needs reports – the American Housing Survey (AHS) – excludes people living in institutional and non-institutional group quarters. This means that there is no federal report that assesses the housing needs of people with disabilities living in nursing homes, health care facilities, correctional facilities, homeless shelters or other group quarters. HUD's report notes that "there is a high prevalence of people with disabilities" in these settings.

Unlike the AHS, which focuses on housing units, the American Community Survey (ACS) focuses on people. According to HUD, the 2009 ACS found that 856,425 people with disabilities are living in homeless shelters, group homes, and other non-institutional group quarters facilities. In addition to this group, TAC and CCD estimate that as many as 350,000 or more non-elderly people with disabilities are living in institutional group quarter settings – primarily nursing homes and public institutions.

TAC and CCD believe that federal housing needs reports should include estimates of need for people with disabilities who are currently living in institutional and non-institutional group quarters and who could live in the community if affordable housing and appropriate supportive services were made available to them. We will continue to work with HUD and with other experts to improve federal housing needs estimates for very low income non-elderly adults with disabilities.

For More Information

See the complete HUD Report at

http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/affhsg/wcn_disability.html