

New Study Reveals that National Average Rents are Higher than Supplemental Security Income Payments Received by People with Disabilities

Vulnerable People with Disabilities Completely Priced Out of Nation's Housing Market

Washington, D.C. -- The national average rent for a modestly priced one-bedroom apartment is more than the entire amount of Supplemental Security Income received by people with disabilities, according to a new study released today by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force and the Technical Assistance Collaborative.

The study, titled *Priced Out in 2010*, reveals that as a national average, people with disabilities living on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) needed to pay 112 percent of their income to rent a modest one-bedroom unit priced at the fair market rent. Rents for smaller studio/efficiency apartments, were 99 percent of SSI.

SSI is a federal program that provides income to people with significant and long term disabilities who are unable to work and have no other source of income and virtually no assets. According to *Priced Out*, in 2010, a single person SSI household received an average monthly SSI payment of \$703 to cover all their basic needs, including housing.

"This study makes it crystal clear why vulnerable people with disabilities become homeless or are unable to move out of high-cost institutional settings," said Ann O'Hara of the Technical Assistance Collaborative, who co-authored the study. "As this study shows, a monthly income of only \$703 is less than the rent for most apartments, particularly in higher cost housing markets."

In addition to national data, *Priced Out in 2010* also provides information on the housing crisis in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts a person who received SSI in 2010, would have needed to pay 127 percent of their income to rent a one-bedroom unit, and 115 percent for a studio/efficiency apartment.

According to the study, over 4.4 million non-elderly adults relied on SSI payments in 2010. The study indicates that as many as 1.2 million non-elderly people with disabilities reside in homeless shelters, public institutions, nursing homes, unsafe and overcrowded board and care homes, or segregated group quarters. An estimated 700,000 adults with disabilities are living at home with aging parents who are 65 or older.

People with disabilities often end up living in restrictive settings, such as nursing homes or board and care facilities, in order to avoid becoming homeless according to O'Hara. "We have a long history in this country of relying on high-cost institutions and other segregated facilities to provide housing and support services for people with disabilities,"

O'Hara stated. Numerous studies have shown that it costs less for people to live in the community, but a federal housing subsidy, such as a HUD Housing Choice Voucher, is essential because rents are so expensive."

Today's study compares the monthly SSI payments received by more than 4.4 million Americans with disabilities to the fair market rental rates for efficiencies and modest one-bedroom apartments in every housing market in the country. The fair market rental rate is determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"While the need is increasing, the number of new supportive housing units available to people with disabilities has been declining. That means that thousands of people remain stuck in expensive government-funded institutions," noted Andrew Sperling from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a Co-Chair of the CCD Housing Task Force.

A 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision found that states may be in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act if people with disabilities remain unnecessarily in segregated facilities. According to O'Hara, the states of New York, New Jersey, Georgia and Illinois must create more than 20,000 new supportive housing units as the result of settlement agreements negotiated with the U.S. Department of Justice.

The report, which was funded by the Melville Charitable Trust, notes that recent federal legislation to reform HUD's Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program could help to create more housing linked with support services in the community. TAC and CCD estimate that more than 50,000 new supportive housing units could be created over a five-year period if Congress provides full funding in Fiscal Year 2012.

"We understand the current budget environment in Washington, but the Section 811 program actually saves the government money by helping to move people with disabilities out of expensive institutions" concluded Sperling. "If people don't have decent housing they can afford, it costs us all more in the long run."

To obtain a copy of the study and any additional information please visit, <http://pricedout.tacinc.org> or call 617-266-5657 x110.

Contacts:

Technical Assistance Collaborative Inc.

Ann O'Hara (co-author) or Emily Cooper (co-author): 617-266-5657

CCD Housing Task Force Co-Chair:

Andrew Sperling – National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):703-516-7222