

## **On Target**

Informing Indiana About Disability Issues

Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities

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## **The NCD reports on the state of housing for people with disabilities**

April is Fair Housing Month and marks the 42nd anniversary of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which prohibits discrimination based on disability, race, color, national origin, religion, sex and familial status in sale, rental or other housing-related transactions.

A report released in January by the National Council on Disability (NCD), titled "The State of Housing in America in the 21st Century: A Disability Perspective," looks at the current housing situation for people with disabilities and the assistance that's available, as well as provides recommendations to government for improvements. The report concludes there is a significant unmet need for housing for people with disabilities of all ages.

According to the report, about 35 million households, roughly one in every three, currently include one or more people with disabilities. In addition, about 1.6 million people live in nursing homes and another half-million live in group homes. It is estimated that 14.4 million households with at least one person with a disability cannot afford housing.

Within its report, NCD states that basic housing needs for people with disabilities are unmet by some developers and property owners.

"Even with laws in place requiring a portion of units to be accessible, some developers and property owners do not comply. Whether this noncompliance is due to ignorance or intent, the evidence suggests we have missed opportunities to increase the supply of accessible, affordable housing," says John Vaughn, NCD chairperson.

Several programs exist to help people with disabilities choose and sustain accessible and affordable housing:

- **System change and coordination**

One of the most promising trends has been the increasing cross-coordination of housing with community living and support systems, funding and service delivery. Many of these initiatives are based on a Money Follows the Person (MFP) program to help Hoosiers transition from a nursing facility or hospital to a residential setting in the community. The MFP program helps provide individuals with ongoing safety and medical help once they live on their own. For more information on the MFP program in Indiana, visit [www.in.gov/fssa/da/3475.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/da/3475.htm).

- **Cross-system navigation**

Several agencies across the state will assist people with disabilities with planning and securing affordable and accessible housing by providing current information

and referrals to special housing agencies. Area Agencies on Aging are located throughout the state to assist people who are elderly or have developmental disabilities. To find a local agency in Indiana, visit [www.in.gov/fssa/da/3478.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/da/3478.htm).

- **Integrated housing**

Most states have integrated housing options for people with disabilities. Integrated housing is a community of homes on one piece of land that offers safe, affordable, and potentially permanent housing for people with disabilities. State and community housing organizations can receive federal aid to increase the availability and affordability of integrated housing.

- **Housing locator systems**

A number of states have developed housing locator systems that allow online searches of affordable housing units. Housing information in Indiana can be found at [www.socialserve.com](http://www.socialserve.com). Click on the “Indiana” link on the home page to get a list of housing options in Indiana.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also offers several programs to help people with and without disabilities:

- **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers**

Provides a rental subsidy to assist households with monthly housing costs based on the income of the household.

- **Section 8 Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (Mainstream Program)**

Designates vouchers to specifically assist people with disabilities in securing affordable housing.

- **Section 8 Homeownership Vouchers**

Permits Section 8 Housing Vouchers to be used to help purchase a home.

More information on these programs can be found at [www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv](http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv). To apply for these vouchers, contact your local housing authority. A list of Indiana housing authorities can be found at [www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/in.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/in.cfm).

To view additional housing data and recommendations within the NCD report, visit [www.ncd.gov](http://www.ncd.gov). Click on “publications by year” in the left navigation bar. The report is listed under the “January 19, 2010” headline.

## Help with fair housing

Securing accessible, affordable housing can be a challenge, but help is available. Several Indiana and national organizations and agencies provide assistance to individuals seeking housing or in need of accessibility modifications to their homes.

Disability.gov includes information about housing rights, tax credits, accessibility modifications and supportive housing services. Indiana-specific resources can be found on the site using the “information by state” tool.

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) provides resources for new home buyers, as well as assistance for existing home owners. The Web site also offers information about Section 8 rental assistance programs. [www.in.gov/ihcda](http://www.in.gov/ihcda), (800) 872-0371 (toll free, voice)

Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services (IPAS) offers assistance specifically for individuals with disabilities. To access housing information, including making accessibility modifications, select "housing" from the "equal access" drop-down menu on the Web site's home page. [www.in.gov/ipas](http://www.in.gov/ipas)

HUD.gov, the Web site for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides several national resources, as well as state-specific assistance. From the home page, select Indiana under the "state info" tab. On the Indiana page, you can select "talk to a housing counselor" to find a HUD-approved counseling agency in your area.

The Indiana Civil Rights Commission helps individuals file complaints to achieve fair housing. [www.in.gov/icrc](http://www.in.gov/icrc), (800) 628-2909

## **Joey Murello selected Ms. Wheelchair Indiana**

Joey Alise Murello, a 26-year-old Noblesville, Ind., native, was crowned 2010 Ms. Wheelchair Indiana Saturday, March 6, as part of Disability Awareness Month. The crown was passed from 2009 winner Emily Munson at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, where Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard kicked off the ceremonies.

Joey, who has Friedreich's ataxia, is passionate about raising awareness of people with disabilities. "Knowledge is power," she said. "If given more knowledge about people with disabilities, the general public will be more likely to have positive attitudes about the disability community."

With her service dog, Hogan, by her side, Joey showed enthusiasm, ambition and even some humor throughout the competition.

"It's like they say, those who can't do, teach!" Joey joked, when telling the pageant audience about her volunteer duties as a cheerleading coach. She loves working with kids, especially because their young minds aren't yet exposed to negative stereotypes. In addition to working full time at the International Medical Group in Indianapolis, Joey volunteers at the Hamilton County Theatre Guild in Noblesville.

Joey will enjoy a year-long reign, during which she'll make several appearances and speak at various engagements across the state. She'll have the opportunity to represent Indiana in the Ms. Wheelchair America pageant, scheduled to take place in Grand Rapids, Mich., Aug. 9–15, 2010. The Indiana pageant was organized by People on Wheels, a non-profit organization that provides information and resources for people who use wheelchairs.

During her time as Ms. Wheelchair Indiana, Joey said she'll "promote and focus on the abilities of those with disabilities to help remove the perception that we are 'different.'"

## **National and state disability stats now in one location**

A new publication, the “Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2009,” provides a single location for state and national statistics about people with disabilities. Developed by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics, the comprehensive compendium is the first to be published and will be updated annually.

According to the compendium, in 2007 there were nearly 276 million people ages 5 years and older living in the community (not including institutions) in the nation, of which about 41.2 million were people with disabilities. In Indiana, 898,900 people with disabilities, or 15.5 percent of the state’s population, lived in their communities in 2007.

The compendium compiles statistics from several federal agencies, focusing on a number of different topics, including:

### ***Employment***

Of the 23.7 million people with disabilities ages 16 to 64 in the United States in 2007, only 8.6 million, or 36 percent, were employed. That same year, the nationwide employment rate of people without disabilities was 75 percent. In Indiana, the 2007 employment rate of people with disabilities was 36.5 percent.

### ***Education***

Fifteen-and-a-half percent of individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 34 years in the U.S. were enrolled in college or graduate school in 2007, compared to 25.5 percent of individuals without disabilities who were enrolled. In Indiana, 14 percent, or 14,550, of individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 34 were enrolled in college or graduate school, whereas 25.7 percent of Hoosiers without disabilities were enrolled.

### ***Health care***

In Indiana, 80.8 percent of individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 44 had health care coverage, a slightly higher percentage than individuals without disabilities in the same age range, of which 80.4 percent had coverage. Of Hoosiers ages 45 to 64, those without disabilities were more likely to have health care coverage — at 90.4 percent — than those with disabilities, at 87.4 percent.

To view the full publication, visit [www.disabilitycompendium.org](http://www.disabilitycompendium.org).

## New library standards create access opportunities

The Indiana Library and Historical Board adopted new standards, which went into effect Jan. 1, giving Hoosiers more access to public library computers and holdings across the state. Important changes include access to online catalogs and Internet terminals.

“The revised standards address future challenges of connecting library patrons to digital-age information and technologies,” said Roberta L. Booker, state librarian, in a recent Indianapolis Star article. “Libraries are community centers that connect Hoosiers to endless sources of information and activities, all in one location.”

Some of the new standards, which apply to all Indiana public libraries, are:

- Every library must have a functional Web site and an online library catalog that can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection.
- All public libraries must provide computers for use by the public at no cost. Each computer is required to have a minimum 1.5 megabytes-per-second Internet connection speed. The number of public terminals provided at each library is based on the number of patrons served by that branch.
- A free, statewide interlibrary lending system allows patrons to access holdings of other Indiana public libraries at no cost, other than photocopying and postage fees.

The new standards also specify that all public libraries must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring services are available to all patrons. The libraries must provide access directly, or through the Indiana state library, to large-print books, Braille books, audio books and enhanced media. For more information about the new standards, visit [www.in.gov/library](http://www.in.gov/library).

## Online resource simplifies health care law

An online resource from the Kaiser Family Foundation helps simplify the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the much-anticipated health care reform that was signed into law by President Barack Obama March 23.

The comprehensive summary outlines the law’s many important provisions in an easy-to-read format, categorizing relevant information by subject area for easy reference. To access a PDF of the summary, visit <http://bit.ly/aGP3Lb>.

The resource highlights many important provisions, including:

- **Individual mandate:** Requires all U.S. citizens and legal residents to have qualifying health coverage, or face a tax penalty.
- **Expansion of public programs:** Expands Medicaid to all individuals under age 65 with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level.
- **Health insurance exchanges:** Creates state-based health insurance exchanges, administered by a government agency or non-profit organization, through which individuals and small businesses can purchase qualified coverage.

The passage of health care reform initiated a flood of debate among law supporters and those in opposition. Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller recently announced that Indiana will join several other states in a lawsuit to challenge the constitutionality of some of the law's provisions.

## **Of Note**

### ***Submit Disability Awareness evaluations***

If you ordered March Disability Awareness Month materials and used the items to conduct an activity or event, please remember to complete and return the Coordinator Evaluation and Participant Evaluation forms included in the kit. Your feedback is valuable in helping the Council plan future campaigns. To ensure Disability Awareness Month continues to be a successful program, it is important that individuals who participate share their experiences and thoughts. Please mail your completed forms to the Council. You can also complete and submit the Coordinator Evaluation form online at [www.indianadisabilityawareness.org](http://www.indianadisabilityawareness.org), or download a PDF of the form from the Web site to mail to the Council.

### ***NCD continues emergency preparedness efforts***

In response to the popularity of its 2009 emergency management report, the National Council on Disability (NCD) created a new Web page that highlights various ways the report has been used to enhance emergency preparedness efforts for people with disabilities. The page provides links to NCD's testimonies before Congress, as well as various presentations and news stories that have referenced the report, titled "Effective Emergency Management: Making Improvements for Communities and People With Disabilities." To access the Web page, go to [www.NCD.gov](http://www.NCD.gov). Click on "Newsletter" in the left navigation bar, and then click on the January 2010 bulletin. Follow the link provided in the "Emergency Management Update" paragraph.

### ***Go Green!***

Did you know you can receive On Target by e-mail? Help us "go green" by switching to an electronic subscription. To subscribe, send an e-mail to [GPCPD@gpcpd.gov](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.gov).

On Target is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council. on target is made available in accessible formats upon request.

## **Partners in Policymaking**

“Partners gives you a feeling of belonging, of community, if you will, that is sadly absent in the lives of many of us who have disabilities. Too often, one feels as though we are alone in our quest for the exact same things that everyone wants: acceptance, accessibility, belonging. After Partners, you will never feel as though you are alone in these fights again.”

– Dee Wheat, 2006 graduate

## **Learn to be a better advocate for yourself and others**

Adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities across Indiana can become stronger, more influential advocates in their local communities and beyond.

With the help of the Partners in Policymaking Academy, the Governor’s Council’s advocacy training program, participants learn how to be effective leaders and advocates, gaining valuable skills and knowledge to influence change.

You, or someone you know, could join the hundreds of Partners graduates who are making a positive impact in their communities, while helping people with disabilities lead more fulfilling lives. Advocates graduate from the academy with valuable skills and the necessary tools and knowledge to apply those skills in the real world to benefit themselves, their communities and their peers.

Partners in Policymaking, a biennial program, enhances disability advocates’ efforts to make meaningful differences in Indiana and the nation. The class involves monthly sessions during which participants have the opportunity to practice skills, including communicating with and influencing community leaders and legislators, in a comfortable and safe environment; build friendships and partnerships with other advocates from diverse backgrounds; and learn best practices from national, state and local experts.

Partners in Policymaking focuses on systems change, teaching individuals how to develop partnerships with elected officials and other policymakers, and helps participants improve their confidence as advocates.

The most effective and enduring public-policy decisions are made when people who need and use services work together with policymakers. Join us and become a catalyst for change.

The next Partners class will take place October 2010 through May 2011. The deadline to apply is June 4.

“Partners gave me the tools and the confidence to advocate on behalf of my daughter and others with disabilities.”

– Don Counts, 2002 graduate

“The ability to explain instead of complain was the best thing I learned.”

– Virginia Morgan, 1996 graduate

“Being a Partners graduate means that I don’t have to sit back and let things ‘happen’ to me and my children. I can be a part of MAKING things happen, and I can help others in the process! Knowledge is power!”

– Claudia Burrows, 1993 graduate

## What to expect from your Partners experience

Partners in Policymaking requires dedication and time, both in and outside of class, and should be taken seriously by all who participate. Class members are required to attend eight monthly sessions, which take place one weekend per month from noon Friday to 4 p.m. Saturday in Indianapolis. Each session focuses on specific disability policy-related topics and features presentations from national, state and local experts.

Session topics may include:

- **History:** Disability rights, independent living, and people-first, self-advocate and parents movements
- **Education:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education and best practices in inclusive education
- **State and local policy:** Services, legislative issues and preparing testimonies
- **Federal policy and legislative issues:** Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), other federal disability laws and effective communication with policymakers
- **Community organizing:** Working with community groups and the media, and negotiating and creating change to impact society
- **Best practices:** Supported living, person-centered planning, family supports, employment and assistive technology

Space in the program is limited, and not all applicants will be accepted. Individuals who are selected are required to sign an agreement to: 1) Attend all sessions and arrive on time; 2) Complete all monthly homework assignments; 3) Develop and carry out a community project; and 4) Conduct themselves in a professional manner during sessions.

The Partners program covers the cost of hotel stays, travel, child care and other related expenses. The only cost for participants is a \$10 non-refundable registration fee, charged when you have been accepted to the program.



## ***How to apply***

To get more information about the Partners program and to apply, visit [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd) and click on the blue Partners logo on the right side of the home page, or go directly to the Partners page at [www.gpcpd.org/partners](http://www.gpcpd.org/partners). From this page, you can access the Partners application, which can either be downloaded or completed online. The Web site also includes pictures, additional testimonials, a brochure, a fact sheet and a link to the national Partners program. Contact the Governor's Council for more details, or to obtain a hard copy of the application, at (317) 232-7770 or [PIP@GPCPD.org](mailto:PIP@GPCPD.org).

Submit your application online or send the completed form to:  
Partners in Policymaking  
c/o Governor's Council for People with Disabilities  
150 W. Market St., Suite 628  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Applications must be postmarked by Friday, June 4. You can also fax the application to (317) 233-3712 or send it via e-mail to [PIP@GPCPD.org](mailto:PIP@GPCPD.org).

“One of the biggest things I learned [from Partners] was that it is imperative that we work as parents to make our children as independent as possible so that as adults, they can live, work and participate in the community to the greatest extent possible with as few supports as possible. The more self-sufficient people with disabilities can be, the more options they have for making a life for themselves consistent with their hopes and dreams.”

– Denise Arland, 2000 graduate

“I have always been frightened of taking on leadership roles. Partners helped me push past that fear. It was definitely empowering.”

– Christine Guth, 2009 graduate