

### **RUTGERS HEALTH The Boggs Center** on Disability and Human Development

### **Robert Wood Johnson Medical School**

# No Place Like Home: A Toolkit for Navigating Housing Decisions for Adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Their Families in New Jersey

## Background

Navigating housing decisions with and for adults with Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) can be challenging. While many resources are available, it can be difficult to access those resources due to the lack of a centralized, easily navigable system. Information about eligibility, funding, available housing, and support services is scattered across multiple platforms and agencies. This toolkit was developed to simplify the process of accessing information and opportunities when searching for and selecting an appropriate living situation for adults with I/DD as they transition from their family home. It empowers individuals and families to make informed, confident housing choices.

## Sources

Development

NJ Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities **Division of Disability Services** The Arc Family Institute Charting the LifeCourse Supportive Housing Association of NJ Housing Hub The Boggs Center Person Centered Planning Resources NJ Council for Developmental Disabilities NJ Department of Community Affairs NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency US Department of Housing & Urban

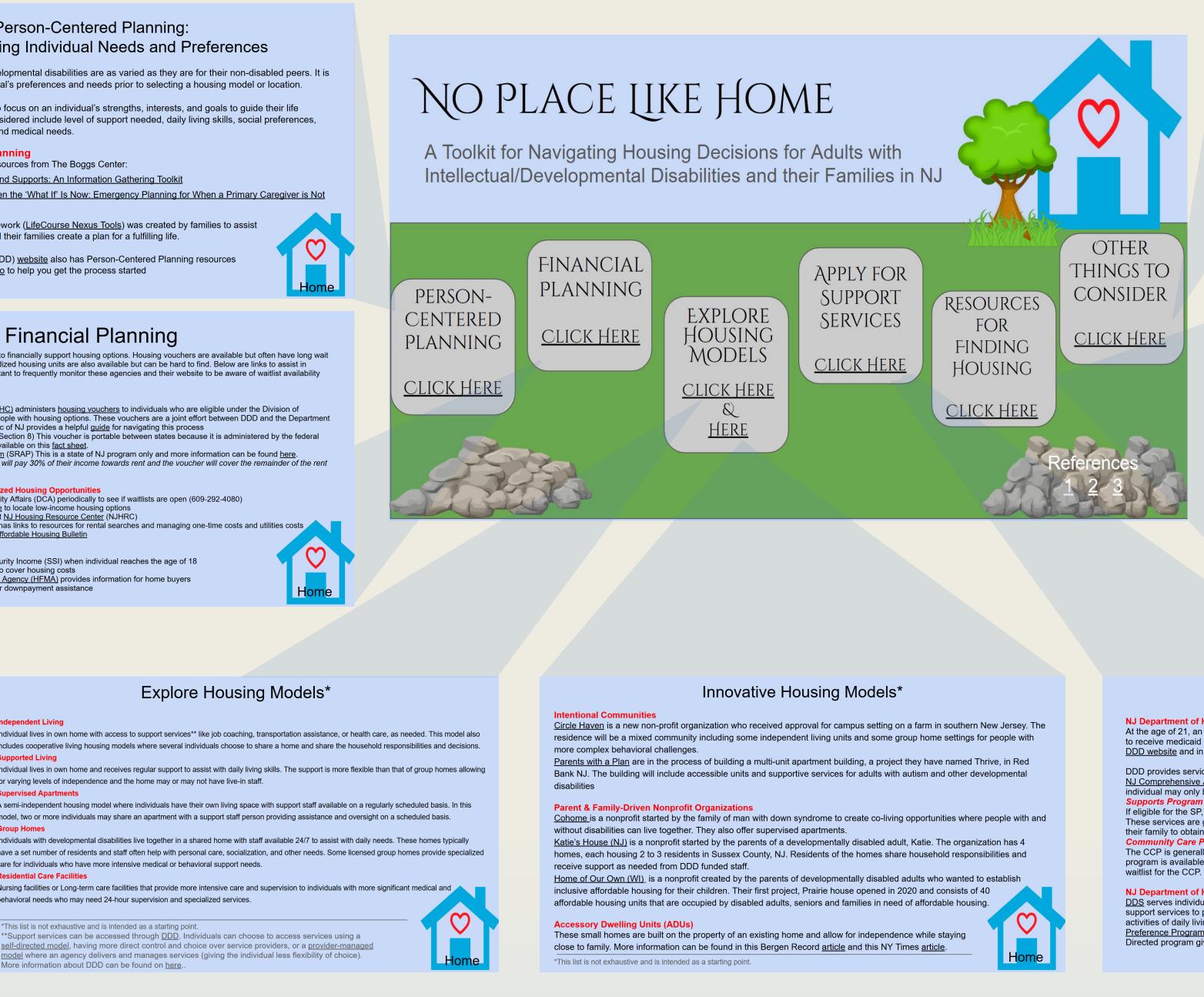
Person-Centered Planning: Understanding Individual Needs and Preferences Housing options for adults with developmental disabilities are as varied as they are for their non-disabled peers. It is mportant to understand the individual's preferences and needs prior to selecting a housing model or location. Person-centered planning tools help focus on an individual's strengths, interests, and goals to guide their life decisions. Areas that should be considered include level of support needed, daily living skills, social preferences. community access, transportation and medical needs Tools for Person-Centered Planning Person-centered Planning Resources from The Boggs Center Exploring Possibilities and Supports: An Information Gathering Toolkit • Planning Ahead for When the 'What If' Is Now: Emergency Planning for When a Primary Caregiver is Not Charting the LifeCourse Framework (<u>LifeCourse Nexus Tools</u>) was created by families to assist ndividuals with disabilities and their families create a plan for a fulfilling life. The NJ Department of Disabilities (DDD) website also has Person-Centered Planning resources and a brief explanatory webinar video to help you get the process started Financial Planning Individuals can use a variety of resources to financially support housing options. Housing vouchers are available but often have long wait lists and require diligence to obtain. Subsidized housing units are also available but can be hard to find. Below are links to assist i learning about these resources. It is important to frequently monitor these agencies and their website to be aware of waitlist available and to ultimately obtain these resource <u>Supportive Housing Connection (SHC)</u> administers housing vouchers to individuals who are eligible under the Division of These vouchers are a joint effort between DDD and the Departmer nsumer Affairs (DCA). The Arc of NJ provides a helpful <u>guide</u> for navigating this process Federal Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) This voucher is portable between states because it is ad irmation is available on this fact sheet. <u>I State Rental assistance program</u> (SRAP) This is a state of NJ program only and more information can be found <u>here</u>. lote: When using a voucher, an individual will pay 30% of their income towards rent and the voucher will cover the remainder of the ren Check with Department of Community Affairs (DCA) periodically to see if waitlists are open (609-292-4080) Visit Public Housing Agency website to locate low-income housing options ousing options at NJ Housing Resource Center (NJHRC) DDD's <u>How to Find Housing Guide</u> has links to resources for rental searches and managing one-time costs and utilities costs
Supportive Housing Association's <u>Affordable Housing Bulletin</u>

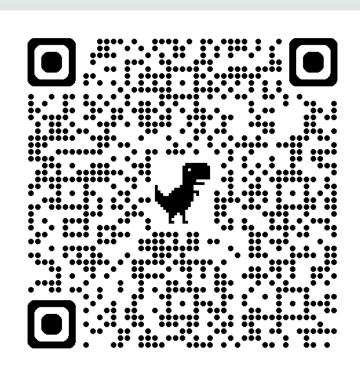
Apply for Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) when individual reaches the age of 18 account funds can be used to cover housing costs NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HFMA) provides information for home buyers

More information about DDD can be found on here

To access the full Housing Toolkit and a complete list of references scan these QR codes.

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## Toolkit

### Other Considerations

The Supportive Housing Association of NJ (SHA) compiled a helpful <u>reference guide</u> that lists various housing projects throughout NJ that have been built using universal design principles and will provide accessible housing for adults with

SHA also highlights other housing models available in <u>videos</u> on the <u>Housing Hub</u> of their website Assistive Technolo

financial assistance programs, product suppliers, government resources, and advocacy groups

Assistive technology can help developmentally disabled adults live independently by providing tools that enhance their abilities echnological devices assist in the areas of communication, daily living skills,safety and emergency situations among others. SHA has a helpful bulletin listing resources available in this assistive technolog

nodifications to an existing home to be able to live in it safely and independently DDD offers funding for environmental modifications independence that can be accessed with the help of a support coordinato Disability Information and Advocacy League (DIAL) website also has a comprehensive guide detailing programs and services available in NJ including financial assistance, eligibility criteria, and types of modifications covered. lomeMods.org is a national website with a <u>NJ resource page</u> that includes information on modification services,

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### **Resources for Finding Housing**

After assessing the needs, preferences, financial resources, and potential housing models, the next mportant step is to contact organizations that specialize in housing for adults with development disabilities to request information and site visits. Below are links to the website of some organizations to help you get started.\*

**Finding Affordable Homes** How to Find Housing Guide NJ Housing Resource Center Housing & Community Development Network of NJ NJ HUD Buildings List Affordable Homes NJ Piazza & Associates Project Freedom

Agency Resources The Arc of Bergen & Passaic\*\* The Arc of Camden County\* Bergen County United Way Community Access Unlimited Community Options, Inc. <u>Jespy House</u> Mt. Bethel Village <u>WiLo NJ</u>

This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a starting point <sup>7</sup> The Arc has a chapter for every county in NJ, each with their own website containing info on housing in that

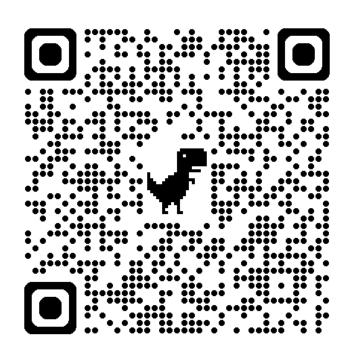
### Apply for Support Services At the age of 21, an individual with I/DD may be eligible for support services through DDD. To qualify, one must be eligible

to receive medicaid and meet the functional criteria of developmental disabilities (eligibility information can be found on th DDD provides services through one of two medicaid waiver programs which will be determined based on the results of the Comprehensive Assessment Tool (NJ CAT) an individual completes as part of the DDD application process. An lividual may only be enrolled in one waiver program at a time If eligible for the SP, an individual can obtain support services while living with their family or in other non-licensed settings

services are generally delivered in a self-directed manner with a support coordinator assisting the individual and their family to obtain those services through various provider The CCP is generally intended for individuals who require the greatest levels of support. This waiver program is available to individuals living in unlicensed or licensed residential settings. There is a lengthy

NJ Department of Human Services' Division of Disability Services (DDS) DDS serves individuals with various disabilities throughout the state providing access to information and support services to promote independent living. An eligible individual can access support services for activities of daily living through the Personal Assistance Service Program (PASP) or the Personal eference Program (PPP). PASP generally provides services through agencies while PPP is a more selfrected program giving an individual more control over hiring and managing personal assistant







# Toolkit Overview centered planning, helping I/DD need public or private models and the individual's the toolkit offers valuable resources for finding housing opportunities, as well as housing, using assistive enhance independent living.

The toolkit starts with personindividuals define their interests, preferences, and goals. Financial planning is essential, as many with assistance to be able to secure housing. Understanding housing readiness for independence is crucial, as is accessing support services when necessary. Lastly, information on aging in supportive technology and making home modifications to allow for and

### **Next Steps**

This toolkit offers guidance to navigate various government systems to access financial assistance and support services related to housing. I plan to reach out to various state agencies, service providers, and advocacy groups to offer this toolkit for distribution to families and individuals who may benefit from it.

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