



## Housing Policy

Our vision is to increase the number of housing options available to adults with autism and other developmental disabilities by advancing new residential prototypes that consider innovation, individuality, community integration and choice while balancing economic realities.

AFAA is committed to energizing an era that brings public, private and nonprofit sector interests together, and allows adults with autism and their families to choose their residence based on their individual needs. We advocate for allowing the marketplace - comprised of individuals with autism and their families - to choose where they want to live, how they want to live and who they want to live with.

We want to contribute toward defining and promoting best practices through existing and new innovative prototypes, as well as set forth the guardrails to protect the integrity of the policy and the freedom it provides.

The closing of institutions for individuals impacted by developmental disabilities more than four decades ago set off a civil rights movement across the country that continues to benefit individuals with disabilities today. The warehousing, poor treatment and abuse transpiring within a fractured system dominated the debate and set the stage for new housing models that included smaller numbers, more community integration and a welcomed focus on individuality and person-centered planning.

Fortunately, much has changed since the '60s and '70s: technology now exists that keeps us safe, informed and connected; real estate design and development presently allow for intentional communities; and integration opportunities are available for special populations who contribute at all levels of our communities.

These advancements and corresponding innovations have the potential to empower new, enterprising strategies and yield more options for the 500,000 children with autism entering adulthood this decade and those persons who seek to choose alternative residential settings. In anticipation of the coming "perfect storm" of support needs, time is of the essence as we face an ever-increasing population of adults, dwindling government resources and few available housing options.

AFAA is committed to navigating the storm while promoting opportunities for higher quality of life and greater hope for the future.

As stakeholders in the discussion of community, let us draw upon the lessons we have learned from the population of adults with autism and special needs, and the civil rights pioneers who came before us as we pursue and promote innovative and economically viable solutions.

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