

The Issue

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are living with a developmental disability. There are over **100,000** Canadians with a developmental disability that are also facing barriers accessing affordable housing, which also provides necessary support and flexibility to give them a full life in their community.¹

Just over **75%** of adult Canadians with a developmental disability who do not live with their families, **are living in poverty, are at a very high risk of homelessness,**² and are over-represented among the estimated 35,000 homeless Canadians.

Approximately **62,000 Ontario adults have a developmental disability.** Within this group up to 40% are likely to have a concurrent mental health diagnosis – known as “dual diagnosis.”³

Out of the **14,800 individuals with a developmental disability** on the waitlist for residential support and/or affordable housing, **over 4,500 of them live here in Toronto.**

Almost **30,000 adults with a developmental disability** living in congregate residential facilities and group homes want to have a home of their own.⁴ However, they face barriers because of the lack of affordable housing, available staff support and financial means to securing a mortgage.

An estimated **5,000 adults with a developmental disability** in Ontario under the age of 65 currently live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities because they cannot acquire affordable housing that allows them to access necessary personal supports for their day-to-day care.⁵

Barriers to Affordable and Supportive Housing

Cost/Income – Most people with a developmental disability receive ODSP. With the average yearly income below \$14,000, this puts them well below the income levels considered by the City for affordable housing. Furthermore, ODSP limits the amount people can spend on rent. The current maximum is around \$500 a month.

As a result, adults with a developmental disability have to depend on other sources of funding to have a decent place to live. Furthermore, requirements to receive additional funding may involve complex processes, be difficult to navigate or have long waitlists attached.

Appropriate and Accessible Supports – Currently, the planning and design phases of affordable housing development typically don't take into account the support needs of people with developmental disabilities, including required health, physical and social care. Finding a place to live does not guarantee, and may even put at risk getting the personal support required, unless a person is already connected to a service agency or supportive network.

Societal Attitude and Stigma – Condo and affordable housing boards/groups are often resistant to including people with developmental disabilities in their buildings: there is still much confusion, discrimination and stigma associated with the persons with a developmental disability.

The Role of the TDSA

The **Toronto Developmental Service Alliance** is a network of 27 not-for-profit organizations and agencies that provide a wide range of residential and specialized community-based programs and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Collectively, we serve thousands of individuals and families living in the City of Toronto and the GTA and employ approximately 4,000-5,000 people.

TDSA's Housing Sub-Committee, has been created to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the critical shortage of affordable housing options available for people with developmental disabilities. We want to initiate constructive and productive dialogue, and work collaboratively with all of the relevant partners (our member organizations, housing authorities, developers, all levels of government as well as families) to generate new and effective approaches to address both the short and long-term housing needs of individuals served by TDSA members.

Work Completed to Date

The TDSA's Housing Sub-Committee members have participated in numerous housing forums at the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. Other successful events include:

- Active outreach to raise awareness and support connections for affordable, barrier-free, supportive housing (started in 2016)
- Inclusionary Zoning Consultation Feedback Form Submission (August 2016)
- Creation of an Affordable and Supportive Housing Information Guide (October 2016)
- TDSA Affordable and Supportive Housing Forum (October 2016)
- Inclusive Housing Design Session with Build Toronto (May 2017)

TDSA Housing Data

The TDSA Housing Sub-Committee completed a survey with TDSA member organizations compiling information on current housing services and supports that are being provided within Toronto and the GTA. Data collected from the respondents of the survey conclude:

- TDSA member organizations provide residential support to **2,200+ individuals** within the GTA and **1,200+ individuals** beyond the GTA
- TDSA member organizations **own 190+ properties**
- TDSA member organizations **manage 400+ units** through head leases and referral agreements
- TDSA member organizations are currently partnered with affordable housing developers for **80+ units**

