



Rutgers Center for
State Health Policy

NATIONAL ACADEMY
for STATE HEALTH POLICY

January 2005

Fact Sheet

Community Living Exchange

Funded by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Housing Information Update #27:
New Jersey Governor Proposes
Development of Housing Trust Fund
to Expand Housing for
Individuals with Disabilities

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The Community Living Exchange at Rutgers/NASHP provides technical assistance to the Real Choice Systems Change grantees funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

We collaborate with multiple technical assistance partners, including ILRU, Muskie School of Public Service, National Disability Institute, Auerbach Consulting Inc., and many others around the nation.

This document was developed under Grant No. P-91512/2 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government. Please include this disclaimer whenever copying or using all or any of this document in dissemination activities.

This Information Update is the twenty-seventh in a series to be made available to improve awareness and understanding of alternative approaches to expand affordable and accessible housing choices for Americans with disabilities. These updates will feature new publications, policy developments at a federal, state, and local levels, and other strategies being pursued by grantees, community and faith-based organizations, and housing agencies to respond to the Olmstead “Community Inclusion” mandate. These Information Updates are being prepared by Michael Morris, Director of the National Disability Institute at the NCB Development Corporation on behalf of the Community Living Exchange at the Rutgers University Center for State Health Policy. To contact Michael Morris directly, his email address and phone number are mmorris@ncbdc.org, (202) 521-2930.

HOUSING INFORMATION UPDATE NUMBER 27

New Jersey Governor Proposes Development of Housing Trust Fund to Expand Housing for Individuals with Disabilities

During his first State of the State address on Tuesday, January 12, Acting Governor Richard Codey solidified his administration’s commitment to helping individuals with disabilities in the State of New Jersey by proposing the creation of a \$200 million housing trust fund. This fund is the initial step that will assist in the creation of 10,000 permanent, affordable housing opportunities over a 10-year period and is the beginning component of a comprehensive housing plan to come from the Governor’s Task Force on Mental Health.

The Housing Trust Fund will:

- Establish a pool of funding for the expansion and rehabilitation of existing, and development of new housing opportunities to include supportive housing; specialized and other independent living arrangements;
- Complement current Housing Choice Voucher programs and future recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on Mental Health;
- Prioritize housing for persons with mental illness while also including the disability population as a whole.

According to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, there are approximately 8,000 people with mental illness who are chronically homeless in the state. Forty percent (40%) of all admissions to the State psychiatric system are homeless and fifty percent (50%) of persons with mental illness are adults currently living at home with aging parents age 55 and older. The New Jersey Department of Human Services estimates there are approximately 351,366 people with mental illness in New Jersey.

The lack of affordable housing has become the largest barrier for individuals with disabilities to increase opportunities for community-based, independent living. This proposed housing trust fund is a good step in providing the necessary financial

investment to expand affordable housing options and provide additional opportunities for individuals with disabilities to make independent choices as to their living environment.

Governor Codey's \$200 million Housing Trust Fund will be funded through unused capital bond capacity identified by the State Treasurer. The Governor also proposed to help pay off up to \$20,000 in student loans for college graduates who work for the state, county or nonprofit mental health or other social service organizations.

To learn more about this proposal, visit <http://www.state.nj.us/sos2005/highlights.html>