



Housing, Employment and Community Supports

A Guide for Students in Transition

Residential Supports

OPWDD is expanding the housing options available for people with developmental disabilities, including students who are transitioning from school to adult life. OPWDD is increasing opportunities for individuals to live in community settings with the supports they need to be as independent as possible. OPWDD supports include:

- **Living at Home with Family or Independently:** OPWDD can provide supports and services to help someone live successfully in a private family or individual home.
- **Family Care:** Housing in private, certified homes in which families provide support, guidance and companionship.
- **Home Ownership:** The Home of Your Own Program allows income-eligible, first-time homebuyers who have an intellectual or developmental disability (ID/DD) and their parents or legal guardians to purchase their own home.
- **Supportive Housing:** Subsidized housing with on-site services designed to meet people's needs for support. Rent within this support is usually set at 30% of the tenant's income.
- **Market Rate or Subsidized Apartments:** Market rate apartments offer a broad range of services, including meals, housekeeping, and transportation. Subsidized apartments are established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and vary within each county.
- **Public Housing:** Provides affordable rental housing opportunities for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and individuals with all types of disabilities.
- **Shared Living Arrangements:** Allows individuals to choose where they live and who provides live-in support.
- **Customized Residential Options:** A single family home owned by a non-profit organization and rented to individuals with a developmental disability. Each "tenant" has his or her own lease and tenants work together to establish rules of the house.
- **Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs):** Homes in the community that are operated by a not-for-profit service provider. IRAs are shared by a small number of individuals with developmental disabilities and provide staff support on-site according to the residents' needs.

To learn more about the Home of Your Own program or to request housing counseling, contact OPWDD's Office of Housing Initiatives and Supports at (518) 473-1973 or housing.initiatives@opwdd.ny.gov

Supports for Community-Based Living

Other community-based services can help people develop skills that promote community inclusion. These services can include help with employment, education, increased independence in travel, and the development of social, leisure, self-advocacy, and behavioral skills.

- **Community Habilitation (CH)** is a service available to help with community inclusion, integration, and relationship building. CH provides hourly paid staff to teach an individual how to live safely and independently in their home and community. CH can be either self-directed or agency-sponsored.
- **Assistive Technology (AT)** can include environmental modifications and adaptive devices that can help people live as independently as possible. Environmental modifications are physical changes to the person's home that allow an individual to access and live safely in their home. Adaptive devices are tools that support independent living.

Employment Services

OPWDD offers employment programs that use person-centered planning to help identify an individual's strengths, skills, and interests. The job development process matches individuals with the right job. Other employment supports include help with creating resumes and preparing for job interviews, and assistance with transportation needs. Employment staff can go with applicants to job interviews, help individuals learn job duties and understand how to fit in with other employees at work. Ongoing support is provided through worksite visits and can help with changes in job duties. Services include:

- **Supported Employment (SEMP)** provides ongoing supports that an individual needs to obtain and/or maintain a paid competitive job in the community. Individuals with developmental disabilities typically transition into SEMP after they have received intensive supported employment services funded by New York State Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR).
- **Prevocational Services** provide the opportunity for an individual to participate in general training activities to build on their strengths and to overcome barriers to employment. These services help individuals who want to work, but need extra help developing the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.
- **Employment Training Program (ETP)** offers individuals an opportunity to work in an internship that will lead to permanent employment in a community business. Individuals learn the different skills needed to maintain a job and are paid at least minimum wage. ETP can assist students to gain work experience while in school. It also provides job readiness classes that cover a variety of topics including conflict resolution, job development, job coaching, and other important employment skills.

For more information on community based services available to individuals with developmental disabilities, e-mail student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov or contact OPWDD's information hotline at (866) 946-9733 or TTY: (866) 933-4889 to get connected with your local OPWDD transition coordinator.