

## Overview of Service-Enriched Housing

The Housing and Health Services Coordination Council was created in 2009 to increase state efforts to expand service-enriched housing.

[Pictures: woman relaxing on her porch, man with dog on his porch]  
Service-enriched housing allows older adults and persons with disabilities to return to or remain in their own home and maintain their independence.

[Onscreen text: Felix Briones, Jr., member, Housing and Health Services Coordination Council]

FELIX: They put certain rules on you that you couldn't and I just couldn't take it any more. I said, it's time for me to find another place to live. I went through the interview and I filled out all the paperwork and I found out that I was eligible with my income. Once I saw this place I said, it sounds good!

FELIX CONT: I can wash and dry my clothes, I just can't hang or fold towels so the little things that I can't do, I mean I'll try them first. I'll see if I can do it first, but if I can't then I'll let my attendant go ahead and take care of it.

FELIX CONT: You've got to have someone in the housing agency that's actually trying to get you an apartment that you can afford. And then you have to have the services agency...

FELIX CONT: See it's not really tied together but you still have to have both agencies working at the same time to try to make sure that there's no lapse in either housing or the services. So that the person doesn't end up homeless.

[Video: Felix in his wheelchair at his accessible sink washing dishes]

This form of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing offers individuals the opportunity to receive on-site or off-site health-related and other support services – help with housekeeping, grocery shopping, personal care, plus medical and health-related assistance.

[Pictures: group of people at a groundbreaking ceremony for new property, property in San Antonio, older adults, property in Amarillo, TX with pool, property with gardens, close up of man in his apartment]

As more people are living longer, the need for accessible, affordable, and integrated housing continues to grow, and an aging population increases the need for long-term services and support.

Most people indicate that they'd prefer to age in place, either staying at home or choosing from a range of affordable and accessible housing options within their own communities.

Beyond quality of life benefits and potential cost savings, aging adults have a positive impact on the broader community.

[Onscreen text: Doni Green, Vice Chair, Housing and Health Services Coordination Council]

DONI: We believe as a Council that we really need to respect the inherent dignity of the individual and allow him or her to make choices, including choices about where home is going to be.

DONI CONT: There are 16 members on the Council, 8 who represent state agencies – the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, and I won't list them all...

DONI CONT: And then the 8 members who are appointed by the governor include advocates for groups with disabilities.

DONI CONT: The purpose of the Council is to expand the reach of service-enriched housing.

It's something that really needs to be based on the individual's wants, preferences, and needs.

[Onscreen text: Michael Goodwin, member, Housing and Health Services Coordination Council]

MICHAEL: Conventional developers are not used to coordinating with local service agencies to make sure that the residents can have those services if they want – by choice – but if they want them, how do they get them. I've heard stories on both sides. We can't find housing – I've got somebody that will help me but there's no place to live. On the other, I have housing but I don't know where any services are.

[Picture: man in wheelchair on front porch of his accessible home]  
With the right supports and services, persons with disabilities can maintain personal independence.

Some older adults and persons with disabilities may have limited income including those living on Supplemental Security Income.

In 2014, the monthly supplemental security income payment for a single individual living in Texas was \$721 or \$8,652 a year.

For people who rely on these payments, all their monthly income may go to pay the rent, leaving nothing for food, medication, and other needs.

[Pictures: man at mailbox, man in wheelchair who is homeless and is fishing]  
People may have to choose between homelessness or going to an institutional setting like a nursing home.

[Onscreen text: Paula Margeson, member, Housing and Health Services Coordination Council]

PAULA: Once upon a time I was a single mom with two small children, one of whom is blind and was blind at the time and was four-years-old. And I had \$600 to live on with my children. Now this was longer ago so in those days... I think proportionately it would have been about the same. I was trying to make it with my kiddos and my rent was almost half of my income. The way we lived, even deciding to make a decision to get an ice cream cone, I had to really ponder because there wasn't extra money for things you know.

PAULA CONT: Probably 80 to 85% of the people we serve have an income of less than 750 a month so housing, to even make that work, is just a huge puzzle to solve.

[Video: Felix moving in wheelchair through the gate of his apartment complex]

FELIX: Most of the people in wheelchairs are also just getting SSI, so your income is limited. So you got to be able to... I mean sometimes you have to choose do I want to be able to afford to pay my bus pass.

[Video: Felix moving in his wheelchair to the bus stop]

FELIX CONT: If you can't afford to get on the bus, what's the sense of it being outside your complex. I mean you got to be able to afford getting on that bus to go look for a job or go get groceries or go to the doctor.

FELIX CONT: With my older chair, it kept breaking down so I'd get to the front gate I'd get stuck. Some of my neighbors would hear me cussing my chair out cause it wouldn't run any more. So they'd get out and they'd help me push it all the way to my apartment.

[Video: Neighbor walking her two dogs greeting Felix]

FELIX CONT: That's one thing. You got to have a place to live where people are not scared of you. Or not scared of you, but scared of seeing someone out there with a disability.

And then if you want to help somebody else cause I've helped other people by, "Hey, you know. You want me to carry that to your apartment for you?" And we'll put it on my chair and if they're carrying something heavy, I'll help them.

FELIX CONT: You're not only helping yourself, you're helping others too you know. So that's what I like about this place.

Service-Enriched Housing can improve quality of life in a multitude of ways.

A key component is to offer aging adults and persons with disabilities the opportunity to be part of mainstream society by providing the services that allow access, choice, and interaction in integrated settings.

Affordability is also a priority. Ideally people should pay no more than 30% of their adjusted gross income on housing costs – and that includes utilities. Housing should be offered with all the rights of a tenant, which includes a lease between a renter and a landlord.

All services should be voluntary and not a condition of housing.

PAULA: In the independent living moment we're really about choice. We're about people having a say in the services they receive and never mandating that a service has to be provided or that a person has to partake in a service. If you just put yourself in the place of a person with a disability trying to live on a really limited income and think of what services and what supports would you need in order to do that, and if you don't get those services and supports what might happen to you. And that the people that we serve every single day.

[Onscreen text: Craig, tenant, Service-Enriched Housing]

CRAIG: I'm still settling in. But it's been a very pleasant experience. And the parts that I was afraid of have kind of gone away. And the aide comes and the therapist comes and the counselor comes and physical therapy comes and fill in all these things for me. And I've got a full house to live in. I can make oatmeal in the kitchen for breakfast. I've got a TV. I've got my books.

CRAIG CONT: It's been a lot of reaching out to me. And not a lot of me trying to figure out of this agency what I need. So I've got a bunch of angels on my side.

[Onscreen text: Relocation Specialists – Department of Aging and Disability Services; STAR+PLUS – Health and Human Services Commission; Mental health supports – Department of State Health Services]

Many individuals access multiple state agencies and organizations in order to move into the community and maintain their independence.

Every two years, the Council prepares a report of its findings and recommendations. After public input, the report is submitted to the Office of the Governor and the Legislative Budget Board and can be found here:

<https://tdhca.state.tx.us/hhsc/biennial-plans.htm>

To find out more about service-enriched housing and the Council, go to the Housing and Health Services Coordination Council website:

<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/hhsc/index.htm>