



Late Backup

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April 5, 2012

ADAPT of Texas Comments on the 2012-13 Annual Plan

Affordability

The waiting list for Section 8 Housing is about 6 years long; Public Housing is about a year. Housing costs are through the roof, especially the new housing which would be more likely to be accessible. The City's current "affordable" housing development targets people with incomes at 80% of Median Family Income, MFI, (about \$39,850 for a single person). Most of our members and many in the disability community are below 15% MFI (SSI payments are about \$698 per month; \$8,376 a year.) Social Security Disability is a little higher. Attendants who provide home health services to people with disabilities make about \$13,836 a year. ADAPT of Texas asks the City Council to allocate \$110 million of bonds for Affordable, Accessible, integrated housing.

It is our understanding Austin will lose \$61,624,934 in affordable housing funds over the next 7 years. This is due in part to cuts in federal and state funds, the major sources of housing funding. Unless the City of Austin takes a stand and invest local funds for housing that is affordable, accessible and integrated in the community many low income people will be forced to move to surrounding communities. Surrounding communities may not have public transportation and other vital services and supports like home health care.

Barrier Removal

There is a tremendous need for assistance to people with disabilities who need access in their own homes. Inaccessible housing is substandard for people who need access. If you are a prisoner in your own home because you cannot get in or out independently due to lack of a ramp, railing, accessible fire alarm or other access accommodations, your housing is substandard. This program must be consumer driven.

Enforcement

The federal Fair Housing Amendments Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act all address requirements to make housing and related services accessible for people with disabilities. These laws are often times not followed; if there is no enforcement, compliance is unlikely to occur. Enforcement of these laws should be a priority. Existing and future housing projects should be surveyed to ensure compliance. The Austin Tenants Council runs the Tenant's Rights Assistance Program that helps with enforcement of access laws. Approximately 60% of tenants' rights complaints are disability related. ADAPT strongly supports funding of the Tenants' Rights Assistance Program.