

# Housing

The Fair Shake Network (FSN) advocates for housing legislation that increases the statewide availability of accessible, economical, integrated, and safe community-based housing for people with disabilities.

## Facts:

- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 39.2% of West Virginian's 18 years and older have some type of disability. (US 25.6%)
- Median Household Income in West Virginia is \$48,850, ranking 49th out of the 50 states. (American Community Survey)
- Median Individual Income in West Virginia is \$27,446. (American Community Survey)
- Average social security is \$1,381.79, which is \$16,581.48 annually. (Social Security Administration)
- Typical SSI Income is \$763, which is \$9,156 annually. (Social Security Administration)
- Of the 70,844 recipients in the state receiving social security, 68,550 receive social security due to disability. (Social Security Administration)
- 16.0% of West Virginia's population is living in poverty. (American Community Survey)
- 100% of the 68,550 people with disabilities who receive SSI benefits are living in poverty with an annual income that is \$3,082 dollars less than the State's poverty level for one person. (Social Security Administration)
- Existing housing in West Virginia currently includes 6,242 units of public housing and 16,592 of housing choice voucher. (State Association of Housing Authorities)
- Median rent in West Virginia is \$727 per month (which amounts to 95% of SSI recipients monthly income.) (American Community Survey)
- About 1 in 3 households using Section 8 vouchers are headed by a non-elderly (under the age of 62) person with a disability. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

## Issues:

- For people with disabilities, there are far too many barriers to housing. Without affordable, accessible housing in the community, many are at risk of institutionalization or homelessness.
- Across West Virginia and the nation, many people with disabilities are experiencing an affordability crisis. Approximately 4.8 non-institutionalized people with disabilities who rely on federal monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) have incomes averaging only about \$9,156 per year – low enough to be priced out of every rental housing market in the nation. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)
- Many people with disabilities live with aging caregivers (age 60 and older). As this generation of caregivers continues to age, many adult children may be at risk of institutionalization or homelessness. (The ARC).
- An accessible home offers specific features or technologies, such as lowered kitchen counters and sinks, widened doorways, wheelchair ramps and wheel-in-showers. For people who use mobility devices, finding housing with even basic accessibility features (e.g. an entrance with no steps) can be daunting, if not entirely impossible or unaffordable.
- The availability of affordable, accessible housing remains far less than a need, leaving far too many people with disabilities at risk of being institutionalized, stuck in institutional settings, homeless or “worst case” housing (paying too much in rent to be able to afford other basics or living in severely inadequate conditions). (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)
- The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, and national origin. Complaints by people with disabilities often make up the majority of discrimination complaints received by HUD's Fair Housing Enforcement Office and other fair housing agencies. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

### **Federal Eviction Moratorium:**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) took unprecedented action on September 1, 2020 by issuing a temporary national moratorium on most evictions for nonpayment of rent to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.
- The Order temporarily halts residential evictions of covered persons for nonpayment of rent from September 4, 2020, through March 31, 2021. This means that a landlord, owner of a residential property, or other person with a legal right to pursue an eviction or a possessory action cannot evict for nonpayment of rent any covered person from any residential property in any U.S. state or U.S. territory where the Order applies. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)
- The moratorium took effect September 4 and was initially set to expire on December 31. The emergency COVID-19 relief measure enacted in December 2020 included \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance and an extension of the federal eviction moratorium through January 31. President Joe Biden on January 20 issued an executive order instructing the CDC to extend the federal eviction moratorium. In response to President Biden's request, the CDC on January 29 issued an order extending the federal eviction moratorium through March 31, 2021. Extending the moratorium through March provides time for emergency rental assistance to be distributed. (National Housing Law Project)

### **Current Legislation:**

- Senate Bill 252- Relating to unlawful discriminatory practices covered by Human Rights Act and Fair Housing Act. Sponsors: Senators Baldwin, Beach, Caputo, Ihlenfeld, Jeffries, Lindsay, Plymale, Romano, Stollings, Unger and Woelfel
- House Bill 2697- Relating to unlawful discriminatory practices covered by Human Rights Act and Fair Housing Act. Sponsors: Delegates Walker, Barrett, Rowe, Young and Hansen
- House Bill 2998 – Relating to unlawful discriminatory practices covered by Human Rights Act and Fair Housing Act. Sponsors: Delegates Higginbotham, Skaff, Barrett, Rowe, Reed and Garcia
- **Please note:** The purpose of these bills is to add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the categories covered by the Human Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination in employment and places of public accommodation. The bill adds “age”, “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the categories covered by the Fair Housing Act prohibiting discrimination in housing. The bill defines “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”.

{Statistics and Information were obtained from the American Community Survey, the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, The\_ARC, the State Association of Housing Authorities, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Housing Law Project}-

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Meredith Pride, Independent Living Skills Trainer/Advocacy Specialist with the Appalachian Center for Independent Living at [meredithacil@yahoo.com](mailto:meredithacil@yahoo.com) or (304) 965-0376.