

How your area DSO can help you explore individualized housing options—Presented May 14, 2019

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Questions and Answers Summary

DSO Housing Navigators

1. What do the housing navigators do?

Answer: The housing navigator role provides adults with developmental disabilities and their families or caregivers with the information and resources needed to create a unique and person-centered housing plan. They can:

- point you to resources and organizations that can help you create a plan,
- help you through the online Housing Toolkit,
- connect you to Family Support Networks to share information,
- work with housing organizations to find local options and opportunities, and
- share success stories of people going through the same thing as you.

2. What are the names and contact information for the housing navigators for each DSO region?

Answer: You must contact your area Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) agency for this information. To find your area DSO visit dsontario.ca/find-your-dso. You may also call 2-1-1, to find the DSO agency near you.

3. Who can access this service? Is there a maximum age?

Answer: To access this service, you must have a developmental disability, live in Ontario, be 18 years of age or older, and eligible to apply for ministry-funded adult developmental services through DSO.

No, there is no maximum age.

Reminder: You can begin the process at 16 years of age.

4. Do you support individuals who have limited/no natural supports?

Answer: As long as you are eligible for services through DSO, you can ask to speak to a housing navigator for resources to help you with your housing plan; including how to build your personal support network.

5. Do housing navigators assist families with finding live-in or other support workers?

Answer: No, their role is to provide families with resources to help them understand and find housing supports. Check with your area DSO to see how your navigator can help you.

6. What is a compatibility profile?

Answer: A compatibility profile is often used in roommate matching. There are several different tools that may help people choose compatible roommate(s). Your local housing navigator can help you find a tool that is best for your situation.

7. Is there a technology expert at DSO?

Answer: No, however, housing navigators are aware of many different technologies that could work for your housing plan.

8. When will the housing toolkit be available?

Answer: It is available online at dsontario.ca/resources/housing

9. Who was consulted in the development of the housing guide?

Answer: Many different people/families were consulted across the province.

Funding

10. What type of housing funding is available and how do you access the funding?

Answer: Funded services are different across the province. Check with your area DSO to see what types of ministry-funded services and supports are available in your community. The ministry funds the agencies that deliver housing supports. In order to apply for these services, you must apply through your area DSO.

Depending on your need, your local housing navigator can provide you with other types of housing resources not funded by MCCSS. For example: social housing in your area, Ontario Renovates programs, etc.

11. Is the Ministry funding any new housing spaces?

Answer: Funding for services and supports are determined by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). DSO does not know the types of services MCCSS is funding.

12. What are some of the creative ways to use passport funds for housing?

Answer: Passport program funding can be used to create a person-directed plan, which can help you create a housing plan. Passport funding can also be used to help you learn activities of daily living. Your housing plan can include a support worker helping you to develop skills in these areas and at the same time provide you with the support as you need it.

13. Can Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) funds be used for housing?

Answer: Yes, ODSP includes an amount for housing/shelter costs. Please contact the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) office in your area to understand how you can use your ODSP funding.

14. Does the DSO have a relationship with financial institutions to make it easier to obtain mortgages for persons on ODSP?

Answer: No, DSO is the access point for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services funded adult developmental services. We do not have a relationship with financial institutions.

15. Is the family liable if payment to their support workers is not compliant with Employment Standards Act (ESA)?

Answer: A family may be found liable if they operate outside of the ESA. It is recommended that you seek legal advice on this matter if you intend on employing support workers or are concerned with a third party contractor being considered an employee. Step 4: Managing housing supports, of the online housing toolkit, includes some information about this. You can view it at dsontario.ca/resources/housing, and click on Step 4.

Housing Options

16. How do you find affordable housing?

Answer: Most municipalities offer some affordable housing options such as rent-geared-to-income housing, rental supplements and/or housing allowances. You can register for these with your municipality. Make sure you register early as there are usually long wait lists for these options. Also, you should also check advertisements on Kijiji or other classified advertisements for affordable options.

17. How long is the waitlist for housing?

Answer: Social housing wait lists vary from municipality to municipality and often depends on the size of the unit needed.

MCCSS funded residential vacancies are filled from a registry held by the DSO, on a priority basis. It is impossible to predict the length of time an individual may remain on the DSO registry before being contacted for a vacancy.

18. What housing options are available for those who don't qualify for DSO?

Answer: Housing options are the same for everyone; social housing, market rentals, home ownership, etc. Housing navigators only assist those who are eligible for adult developmental services, however, anyone looking for housing options can access the resources available online through the housing toolkit at dsontario.ca/resources/housing.

19. How do you access social housing?

Answer: You have to register through your municipality. Contact your municipality, or if you would like help navigating this, and are eligible for adult developmental services, contact your local housing navigator. Note: Social housing does not provide supports.

20. Is the DSO housing list different from the social housing list?

Answer: Yes. The DSO holds a residential registry for MCCSS funded spaces. These include group living, host family, supported independent living, etc. These vacancies will provide a place to live and the supports necessary. Social housing is housing typically funded and operated by the municipality. This can provide a person with an affordable place to live. Supports required to live there need to be arranged separately and are not provided by the municipality. You can be on both lists at the same time.

21. What housing options are available for those who need 24/7 1:1 support?

Answer: Housing and support options are as varied as the people seeking them. Connect with your local housing navigator to discuss potential resources and/or success stories in this area. Step 6: Learning from Others, of the online housing toolkit also lists some success stories. You can view them at dsontario.ca/resources/housing, and click on Step 6.

22. What housing options are available for those that can live semi-independently?

Answer: Housing and support options are as varied as the people seeking them. Connect with your local housing navigator to discuss potential resources and/or success stories in this area. Step 6: Learning from Others, of the online housing toolkit also lists some success stories. You can view them at dsontario.ca/resources/housing, and click on Step 6.

23. Are there any networking opportunities to find housemates?

Answer: Family Support Networks are currently the best way to connect with others seeking roommates. Check-in with the housing navigator in your area to see how they can help.

24. Is there any priority housing for the developmental sector currently being built in the GTA?

Answer: Connect with your Toronto DSO housing navigator to find out about specific housing within the Toronto Area.

25. Does DSO have plans to establish available housing units?

Answer: The DSO is the access point to MCCSS funded residential services and offers housing navigation through community options. The DSO does not develop, build or provide housing units.

26. Can a TPA offer a residential space to an adult on the waiting list who is not in “crisis mode”?

Answer: When a Transfer Payment Agency (TPA) declares a vacancy, the DSO sends the TPA contact information of the person who is highest priority and who is deemed best fit for that vacancy. They may, or may not, be in a crisis situation.

27. Will there be DSO support and/or advocacy for re-zoning on the municipal level so that families can pursue co-housing options?

Answer: Housing navigators will provide information to municipalities where they feel it is appropriate to help inform decisions regarding local zoning and bylaw considerations.

28. What circumstances qualify for emergency support?

Answer: Everyone’s situation is different and so it is important to keep your local DSO updated on what is happening in your life. DSO staff will work with you to link you to services that are appropriate based on your situation.

29. Where can I find information on successful housing models?

Answer: Connect with your local housing navigator to discuss potential resources and/or success stories. Step 6: Learning from Others, of the online housing toolkit also lists some success stories. You can view them at dsontario.ca/resources/housing, and click on Step 6.

30. Can I be connected to families that have successfully setup housing for someone who needs 24/7 care?

Answer: Connect with your local housing navigator to see if there are families willing to speak about their housing model. Family Support Networks are another great place to connect with others on similar journeys.

31. Has DSO ever worked with condo boards to have support worker units in current buildings?

Answer: The DSO does not work with public or private housing markets. Housing navigators will, however, provide information and support related to the needs of those with a developmental disability within these markets.

32. Are there other housing options for older individuals with developmental disabilities who are currently living in inappropriate situations?

Answer: Contact your local housing navigator for help with your personal situation and to get help navigating resources in your area.

33. How do I find information on the Ontario Renovates Program (ORP)?

Answer: You can find info on the ORP on your municipality's website. This program may or may not be offered within your municipality and not all municipalities call it Ontario Renovates, so look for similar terminology. If you struggle to find the information you can contact your local Housing Navigator.

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