

The Kelsey

Together We Can Do More

Atlanta Metro Area





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SECTION 1:

Executive Summary

Advancing disability-inclusive, affordable housing in Metro Atlanta requires a deep understanding of the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families and the systems that exist to support them. Disability-forward housing, which prioritizes accessibility, adaptability, and inclusive design from the outset, is essential to creating equitable and sustainable communities. In partnership with Better Living Together, The Kelsey conducted a study to identify key themes, challenges, and opportunities in supportive housing development. This process is appropriately referred to as “Together We Can Do More”. This report dives into the key themes and policy recommendations that came from diverse stakeholder engagement, analysis of previous research, and application of best practices from across the nation.

Key findings of the Together We Can Do More Atlanta Metro include:

- A desire for housing options that balance independence with robust support systems
- Emphasis on the need of housing that encourage community engagement, social integration, and accessibility
- Need for new funding solutions and partnerships to enhance disability-inclusive housing impact and feasibility
- Importance of person-centered approaches, focusing on individual needs and preferences
- Challenges in navigating funding frameworks and leveraging Home and Community Based Services for housing stability

The project’s findings inform the development of inclusive housing solutions, prioritizing community engagement, accessibility, and safety. This report will guide supportive housing development in the state of Georgia, promoting inclusive and supportive communities for all.

Recommendations include:

- Developing supportive housing developments and operational subsidies
- Expanding funding solutions and partnerships
- Implementing inclusive design, visitability, and community spaces for social interaction
- Addressing service provider challenges, including provider deserts and coordination costs that come with the scattered sites model

By prioritizing community integration, accessibility, and safety, we can create inclusive housing solutions that support the complex needs of individuals with disabilities and their families.





SECTION 2:

Community Engagement Report



The “Together We Can Do More” project aimed to advance disability-inclusive housing in Metro Atlanta through a comprehensive community engagement process. This report summarizes the themes that emerged from the community engagement phase, including surveys, roundtables, and one-on-one meetings with 126 diverse stakeholders.

Engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders enables the sharing of perspectives across industry as well as elevates voices that are generally not able to share their perspectives on housing policies and preferences. The Kelsey’s community engagement process is a two-way conversation: educating stakeholders about disability inclusive housing and asking what they see as the biggest obstacles to creating it. These conversations create a sense of ownership in the solution and help people understand the shared vision of a future with more affordable, accessible, inclusive housing.

Because the process is more community-building than academic, we share the outputs of the conversations through the concept of themes. Themes help us both identify potential policy interventions and areas where more education of stakeholders is needed. Additionally, The Kelsey has conducted “Together We Can Do More” engagements in seven other markets across the United States ahead of and in parallel to our stakeholder engagement in the Atlanta Metro. Themes are developed through both the conversations we’ve had in Atlanta Metro and other conversations we’ve had across the state of Georgia and the United States about the need for more accessible, affordable, inclusive housing.

Theme 1: Housing Preferences and Needs

The stakeholder engagement process revealed a critical need for housing options that balance independence with robust support systems. Housing models that offer independent living with access to services, as well as group home models for those requiring comprehensive services, are essential. Inclusive housing models, such as The Kelsey, that prioritize inclusivity and support, are particularly appealing to those that participated in the process. Common preferences for housing options include low noise levels, safety features, access to green spaces, access to commercial corridors and opportunities for community integration .



Accessibility, safety, and walkability are essential considerations in housing and public spaces. Stakeholders highlighted the need for personal space, autonomy, and control over environments, as well as support for transitions, including budgeting and consistent support staff. Stakeholders prioritize walkability because they can better access and engage within their community and with each other. Many stakeholders appreciated Decatur’s approach to accessibility and community design cited that town as a model example.

Theme 2: Supportive Housing Models in the State of Olmstead

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of a balanced approach to independence and supportive services. There are challenges to implementing supportive housing models because of differing interpretations around what is allowable under a 2010 settlement agreement between the Department of Justice and the State of Georgia concerning the 1999 Supreme Court case *Olmstead v. L.C.* Some stakeholders perceive the state has been risk averse to allow supportive communities because of the settlement. They instead encourage housing developers to embrace models where people with disabilities who need services are dispersed throughout traditional affordable housing developments. Referred to as a scattered sites model - affordable housers have stated their frustration with the inability to truly support residents being placed within their housing developments. Whether or not the perceptions of risk mitigation are valid, the state should have a conversation with affordable housing developers to explore permanent supportive housing models that are well established in other states and encourage private-public conversations and partnerships to address these challenges.

Theme 3: Comprehensive Service Models

Stakeholders emphasized the need for comprehensive service models supporting families from “cradle to grave,” which includes financial planning for independence through Medicaid, waivers,

and ABLÉ -Achieving a Better Life Experience - accounts. However, the supportive housing crisis, particularly for aging parents, and lack of quality options, heightens the need for holistic support models addressing the spectrum of family needs.

The crisis is further exacerbated by inadequate funding for Medicaid waivers, which provide essential funding for independent living. Currently, over 7,000 individuals are on waitlists, with some waiting ten years or more. This shortage forces families, often aging caregivers, to continue providing care at home, highlighting the need for more established organizations that support individuals in their own homes.

Moreover, providing quality, reliable services in accessible housing is crucial, but this challenge remains unmet due to the exit of support professionals since the pandemic, low compensation, and high turnover rates. These systemic barriers hinder the realization of the Olmstead decision's promise of true community integration, underscoring the need for improved state resources and policies.

Theme 4: Innovative Funding and Partnerships

Innovative funding solutions and partnerships are critical to supporting affordable, inclusive housing models. Examples include HUD 811, LIHTC, and other federal opportunities through EPA and USDA (for rural communities), as well as partnerships between disability nonprofits and local governments. A vision for inclusive communities featuring mixed-use development and preservation of green spaces is essential, with plans for communities accommodating 35+ housing units prioritizing community engagement and stakeholder alignment.

Theme 5: Person-Centered Approaches Within Housing

Person-centered approaches focusing on individual needs and preferences are crucial. Family readiness and support services, post-program support networks, and alumni groups are vital components. Tailoring services to individual needs and preferences ensures effective support. Especially for family-members and caregivers of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, there was a lack of understanding of any programs that could both support the individual needs of their children and provide housing at a reasonable cost. We often heard sentiments of exhaustion or desperation from aging parents who found that a group home model would not be a fit or accessible for their children once they are no longer able to care for their children.

Conclusion

The community engagement process provided valuable insights into the complex needs and preferences of individuals with disabilities and their families. The findings are already informing the development of inclusive housing solutions, balancing independence with support, and prioritizing community engagement, accessibility, and safety. This report will guide supportive housing development in the state of Georgia, promoting inclusive and supportive communities for all.



SECTION 3:

Suggestions and Recommendations

Advocacy Toolkit: Advancing Disability-Inclusive Housing in Georgia

Executive Summary

This toolkit provides a comprehensive framework to support Better Living Together’s mission of creating inclusive and accessible housing options for individuals with disabilities in Georgia. It includes disability-forward housing policy recommendations, organizational recommendations, and development ideas that aim to increase the availability and quality of housing for this underserved community.

Local, Regional, and State Policy Recommendations

The section is a menu of policy recommendations that, if implemented, would increase the supply of disability-inclusive housing and disabled people’s capacity to live and thrive in such housing. Some of the policy recommendations can only be achieved at a specific level of government, while other recommendations can be pursued at local, state, or regional levels of government. The level of government to target to pass or adopt such recommendations should be identified based on various factors, including political, social, and economic. All policy recommendations would support Georgia in meeting current state and federal policy mandates, including the *Olmstead v. Lois Curtis* Supreme Court decision, recent *Olmstead* settlements, and the Georgia HCBS State Transition Plan.



Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) can increase the utilization of Mainstream Housing Vouchers and Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) Vouchers, enabling more disabled adults to obtain tenant-based vouchers.

Mainstream and NED vouchers are special-purpose vouchers of the Housing Choice Voucher Program (previously known as Section 8), and both are tenant-based vouchers for extremely low-income adults with disabilities. As of May 2024, across all Georgia PHAs, the Mainstream utilization rate is 58.21%, meaning 262 Mainstream vouchers are unused. NED vouchers have a 62% utilization rate, with 145 vouchers unused. All PHAs can implement concrete ways to ensure these special-purpose vouchers are leased to individuals with disabilities. For Mainstream Vouchers, HUD issued guidance on August 20, 2024, for new alternative requirements and waivers that enable PHAs to do this, with a particular focus on helping persons with disabilities transition from and avoid institutional settings. Advocates can push their local PHA’s to implement not just the new requirements but also adopt the optional waivers, which include PHA’s creating a separate Mainstream Voucher waitlist and separate preferences for Mainstream Voucher applicants.



Establish and maintain an inventory of all types of accessible units

Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) can promote, incentivize, and/or require projects to identify and track accessible units, including units that follow Section 504 requirements, adaptable FHA units, and units with other accessibility features. This inventory should include public-facing, accessible information that is kept up-to-date for prospective and current tenants. Governments can provide templates and examples for what information should be shared about each unit. One example of this approach is Housing Navigator Massachusetts. Its [online search tool](#) includes information on accessible rentals in partnership with state government and property owners and managers. Governments should work with public housing authorities and require and/or incentivize housing providers to make accessibility information available to the local housing authorities. It is already required to make listings of accessible units available as part of the HUD Housing Choice Voucher¹ briefing process.



DCA must strengthen the implementation of its HUD Section 811 Project-based Rental Assistance (PRA)

HUD Section 811 PRA facilitates the creation of cost-effective, integrated supportive housing units for extremely low-income, non-elderly people with disabilities. In 2012 and 2013, HUD awarded project-based rental assistance to DCA through a partnership with the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority and Georgia Medicaid. The program provides rental assistance, but states must also leverage capital funds from other public and private sources. Developers apply for HUD 811 PRA funds, which ensure that eligible tenants with disabilities pay no more than 30% of their adjusted income for housing costs. Georgia was not awarded Section 811 PRA funds in the last competitive cycle for the Notice of Funding Availability issued in 2023. DCA should evaluate why this occurred and add to its strategic priorities for 2026/2027 to apply and be competitive for the next round. It is unknown when the next round will occur, but traditionally it has been a four to five year award cycle.

There are currently units available for people who qualify for Section 811 in projects that have received PRA vouchers. Here are examples of ways DCA can strengthen the program's administration to benefit all stakeholders, from property owners to eligible 811 tenants.

- **Programmatic Transparency:** DCA can provide transparent information to Georgian disability and housing stakeholders about the current status of 811 PRA, including the number of units currently available.
- **Establish Clear Guidelines and Training for 811 PRA prospective or current recipients:** DCA can develop comprehensive training programs for housing providers on the requirements and benefits of Section 811 PRA. DCA can also create detailed guidance documents and webinars to educate stakeholders on best practices to overcome the perception that Section 811 vouchers do not come with an appropriate level of services.
- **Recruit referral agencies that provide services to a diverse disability population:** Based on the [September 2023 referral agency list](#) available on the DCA website, all referral partners within the five Metro Atlanta Counties (Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton) focus on


¹[Housing Choice Voucher \(HCV\) Data Dashboard | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

servicing people experiencing homelessness. This is indeed an important population to assist with housing transitions, but additional referral partners who understand the unique needs of people with disabilities should also be added. Service providers that focus on skilled nursing home transitions, group home transitions, or supporting people with disabilities at-risk of homelessness due to living with an aging caregiver should be encouraged to join as approved service providers for available Section 811 units.



Georgia can strengthen its Medicaid Home & Community-Based waiver system to increase access to community living for people with disabilities and increase the programs' ability to fund housing-related services.

- **GA can use its budget surplus to significantly reduce the waitlist for the New Option Waiver Program (NOW) and Comprehensive Support Waiver Program (COMP)**, which are Medicaid waivers that serve as instruments to facilitate the provision of essential services to people's homes and communities. Currently, there are over 7K people with intellectual and developmental disabilities on the waitlist. If the state can reduce the waitlist, more disabled Georgians would be able to have the support they need to live in their own homes. Learn more from New Disabled South's "[Uncovering Disparities in Georgia's HCBS Waiver Waitlist](#)."
- **GA Medicaid can apply for an 1115 Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Medicaid waiver from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to address housing needs for Medicaid recipients with a disability.** Section 1115 waivers allow states to "waive" certain Medicaid requirements to enable them to create innovative programs that aim to improve health outcomes for Medicaid recipients. In 2021, CMS encouraged states to use 1115 waivers in new ways to address the "health-related social needs" of Medicaid members. HRSN waivers can cover multiple non-health factors or focus on one critical determinant, including housing. If GA can apply and obtain the 1115 HRSN Waiver, adults with disabilities could get increased support in housing search, navigation, and retention. There are also opportunities to target specific populations, such as people with disabilities who are leaving institutional settings or at risk of institutionalization. Disabled people and their families can advocate for the state to proceed with applying for and obtaining this waiver. [Learn more here](#).
- **Increase wages for direct support professionals (DSPs)** For people with disabilities to live and thrive in the communities of their choice, there must be access to both disability-forward housing and robust support and services. DSPs play an essential role in delivering support to people in their own homes. Recipients or their representatives who Participant Direct their Medicaid waivers have flexibility in how much they pay DSPs since they can make hiring decisions independently. However, those DSPs who work in provider settings are subject to the state's Medicaid reimbursement rate. DSPs make \$10.63 an hour and often must work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Such a low wage makes it very difficult for providers to hire and retain DSPs, making it even more difficult to service people with disabilities in their own homes. Increasing wages for DSPs was also a final recommendation of the [Senate Study Committee on People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Waiver Plan Access \(SR 770\)13 that met in 2022](#) and Georgians for a Healthy Future report "[Realizing the Promise of Olmstead: A housing study & policy recommendations](#)"



Georgia’s Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) can increase requirements and incentives for producing affordable, accessible, inclusive, and integrated housing.

- The QAP can double the requirements for accessible units from 5% for mobility units and 2% for sensory units to 10% and 4%, respectively. The shortage of accessible, affordable housing is a significant barrier to many Georgia residents with disabilities. Often, disabled people have no choice but to live in institutional settings or become homeless. National data shows that 11.1% of people have difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Still, less than 5% of our nation’s housing stock is accessible to people with mobility difficulties, and less than 1% is accessible to wheelchair users. For people with sensory and other disabilities, this shortage is equal or greater. There is no data to quantify how Georgia compares to national numbers, but advocates say the level of scarcity is similar. [According to NCSHA’s factbook](#), in 2022, only 1% of Housing Credit allocations went to units for people with disabilities.
- The QAP can incentivize projects that build units beyond the minimum accessibility requirements. This type of incentive can be codified by awarding points to projects that meet [The Kelsey’s Universal Design Standards](#) at either the Silver/Gold/Platinum level and/or all units meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Type A accessibility standards and/or provide twice the number of accessible and audio/visual units as required by Section 504.
- The QAP can add a distinct category for point criteria for people with disabilities who are at risk of institutionalization without supportive services. By creating a distinct category within state QAP point criteria, states can proactively prevent institutionalization and promote disabled individuals’ independence, dignity, and well-being.



Include extremely low and low-income adults with disabilities who need supportive services as identified target or “special needs” populations within existing housing programs

Embedding the inclusion of disabled adults into existing funding programs is an important way to ensure that the mainstream affordable housing infrastructure begins more effectively meeting the needs of people with disabilities. When funding criteria require or incentivize grantees to be disability-forward or if criteria is explicitly inclusive to disabled people, the projects will be planned and awarded accordingly.

Specifically:

- Funding programs can include disability-specific evaluation criteria, weighting proposals that:
 - Incorporate Universal Design principles
 - Provide accessible and adaptable unit features
 - Offer on-site supportive services
 - Engage disability organizations in project planning
 - Incentives can be offered for projects that:
 - Exceed minimum accessibility standards
 - Integrate disability-focused community engagement

- Partner with disability service providers
- Incorporate accessible technology and smart home features
- Explicitly inclusive funding criteria can ensure that:
 - Disabled individuals are involved in project planning and decision-making
 - Projects address specific disability-related needs (e.g., sensory-friendly design)
 - Grantees demonstrate a commitment to disability inclusivity

By incorporating these strategies, funding programs can promote disability-forward thinking, ultimately leading to more inclusive and accessible affordable housing options.



Increase Availability of Operating Subsidies to Support Service-Linked

Localities or the state can create new funding streams for housing programs that are service-linked and ready for people who need in-home support and services. This can be done by creating an operating subsidy that helps cover the operating costs of a housing project that serves people who need HCBS once it is built, or new project-based vouchers, specifically for people who need HCBS. This funding directed at service-linked housing would mean people who need support to live in their own homes could live independently with support systems built into their housing to allow them to access the services they need and have help in navigating systems.

Additionally underwriting criteria for state and locally-funded multifamily rental housing programs should be evaluated to ensure they permit greater use of project operating funds to provide supportive services to residents throughout the life of projects. Additionally states can expand eligible uses of multifamily rental housing programs to include 20-year capitalized operating subsidy reserves and supportive services reserves.



Remove Inaccessible Requirements from State-Issued LIHTC and Other State-Issued Funds Compliance Manuals

Georgia Department of Community Affairs should scan their Compliance Manuals for practices that have inadvertently created barriers for people with disabilities to access affordable housing by making the leasing process difficult to navigate. Some of these practices that should be reviewed and suggested alternatives are below:

- Requiring in-person interviews for all residents: Video technology builds rapport with future residents without them needing to arrange transportation or take time from their job/program. It also creates more efficient use of resources for property management staff and can facilitate people moving into housing more quickly ensuring higher utilization of publicly-funded housing resources.
- Requiring residents to fully complete their application themselves: Some applications have ballooned to being up to 15 pages long; this is not accessible to anyone and slows down the lease up process. Compliance manuals should explicitly welcome resident's family members, support services staff, or other application support tools to complete applications on behalf of residents.
- Require wet signatures on applications and Tenant Income Questionnaires: The income



compliance process is hard for many residents (and some property managers) to navigate. Sometimes original applications have mistakes and need to be updated. If the future resident's identity is confirmed at the beginning of the lease up process by the property manager subsequent signatures can be collected through e-signature or at lease signing time.

Please note, these should be extended to all residents and not just for those who request a reasonable accommodation process. By extending these disability-forward practices to all potential residents you also reduce the administrative burden imposed on low-income people and fill publicly-subsidized moderate income units more quickly.

SECTION 5:

Conclusion

The “Together We Can Do More” project has provided a comprehensive framework for advancing disability-inclusive housing in Metro Atlanta. Through community engagement, research, and stakeholder input, this report has identified key themes, challenges, and opportunities for creating supportive and accessible housing options. By prioritizing community engagement and accessibility, we can create inclusive housing solutions that support the complex needs of individuals with disabilities and their families.

The policy recommendations outlined in this report offer strategies for local, regional, and state-level changes that can increase the availability and quality of disability-forward housing. By implementing these recommendations, Better Living Together can:

- Increase access to disability-inclusive housing and services
- Promote healthier and more connecting living environments for Georgians with disabilities
- Enhance accessibility and visitability in publicly-supported housing

Ultimately, this report aims to guide supportive housing development in the state of Georgia, promoting inclusive and supportive communities for all. By working together, we can create a future where individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to live independently, participate fully in their communities, and thrive in their homes.





SECTION 6:

Appendices

Definitions:

ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Account: A tax-advantaged savings account for individuals with disabilities, allowing them to save without losing eligibility for government benefits.

Affordable Housing: Housing units priced to be affordable for low-income individuals or families, typically defined as 30% or less of gross income spent on housing.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A federal law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodations, and services.

Community Integration: The process of providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate fully in community life, including employment, education, and social activities.

Disability Advocacy: Efforts to promote and protect the rights, inclusion, and empowerment of individuals with disabilities.

Disability-Forward Housing: Housing that prioritizes accessibility, adaptability, and inclusive design from the outset, creating equitable and sustainable communities.

Disability-Inclusive Housing: Housing that incorporates design principles, services, and supports to promote independence, accessibility, and community integration for individuals with disabilities.

HCBS (Home and Community-Based Services) State Transition Plan: A state-developed plan outlining strategies to comply with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements for home and community-based services, ensuring individuals with disabilities receive care in integrated, community-based settings.

Housing Accessibility: Design and construction features that enable individuals with disabilities to safely and easily navigate and use housing units.

Inclusive Design: Design approaches prioritizing accessibility, usability, and social interaction for individuals with diverse abilities.

LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit): A federal program providing tax credits to developers building affordable housing, encouraging private investment in low-income housing.

Medicaid Waivers: Programs allowing states to waive certain Medicaid requirements, providing flexibility in delivering services to individuals with disabilities.

Olmstead Plan/Decision: A landmark Supreme Court decision (Olmstead v. L.C., 1999) requiring states to provide individuals with disabilities care in the most integrated setting possible, rather than institutions.

Person-Centered Approach: A service delivery model focusing on individual needs, preferences, and goals, empowering individuals with disabilities to direct their own care.

Reasonable Accommodation: Modifications or adjustments made to housing or services to ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities.

Section 504: A federal law requiring recipients of federal funding to provide equal access and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Section 811 Mainstream Housing Choice Voucher Program: A HUD program providing rental assistance and supportive services to individuals with disabilities, enabling them to live in integrated, community-based settings.

Supportive Housing: Affordable housing that combines rental assistance with on-site support services to help individuals with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or other challenges maintain stable housing.

Supportive Services: Non-medical services, such as case management, counseling, and transportation, provided to individuals with disabilities to support independent living.

Transition Planning: A process helping individuals with disabilities move from institutional or segregated settings to community-based living arrangements.

Universal Design: Design principles creating products and environments usable by all people, regardless of age, ability, or disability.

Visitability: Design principles ensuring newly constructed homes are accessible and usable for individuals with mobility impairments.



Case Study:

an Atlanta Metro community with a population of ~37,000

This case study presents a feasibility analysis for developing an affordable, disability-inclusive housing project in a desirable Atlanta metro location. The purpose of this case study is to demonstrate the steps it would take to create disability-inclusive housing in a location that is rollable and walkable to services and amenities. The project would not be possible without support from state and local entities as well as philanthropic support to get the project initially off the ground.

Project Overview

- Develop 55-70 units of affordable, disability-inclusive housing
- Site: 1.35 acres in a downtown area, currently zoned commercial with an opportunity to rezone to mixed-use
- Partnership: Collaborate with local government, leveraging public/private development models
- Target population: 25% of the residents should be people with disabilities who use Home and Community Based Services to live independently; the remaining 75% should be targeted to low and moderate income households with incomes between \$35,000 to \$77,000 a year

- Timeline: Three to five years from site control to resident move in depending on the availability of financial support from state and local sources

Market Analysis

- Demand: High demand for affordable housing, especially units affordable for individuals that are considered extremely low income, meaning they make less than \$20,000 a year
- Supply: Limited housing options walkable to downtown commercial district; average one bedroom rental in town is affordable to people making at least \$67,000 a year
- Market Trends: Growing interest in disability-inclusive housing, walkable, transit-oriented developments

Financial Analysis

- Land Acquisition:
 - Initial parcel: \$500-\$1M
 - Adjacent parcel: TBD (additional space will make project more financially feasible to enable surface parking and a more flexible site but may take additional time to acquire)
- Development Costs:
 - Estimated construction costs: \$15-20 million
 - Soft costs (design, permits, etc.): \$2-3 million
- **Funding Opportunities:**
 - HUD Section 811 Program or other vouchers for residents with limited income or on SSI
 - (both federal and state credits)
 - Local government incentives (tax abatements, etc.)

Pathway to Development

1. Land Acquisition:

- Get site control of initial parcel with a long purchase option in order to test feasibility of project; use philanthropy for initial site deposits
- Negotiate with adjacent property owner to increase chances of feasibility
- Conduct environmental and site assessments

2. Land Use Petition:

- Submit petition and Public Participation Plan to local government
- Engage with local government and community stakeholders through public meetings and surveys
- Incorporate feedback and recommendations from community engagement report
- Work with municipality to rezone to support increased density

3. Design and Permitting:

- Hire architects and engineers experienced in inclusive housing design
- Design 55-70 units, incorporating [The Kelsey's Inclusive Design Guidelines](#) and Inclusion Concierge program

- Secure necessary permits and approvals from local government
- Address potential access and ROW dedication requirements

4. Funding:

- Pursue GA LIHTC funding and other state incentives
- Explore Foundation of Greater Atlanta and other below-market funding opportunities
- Leverage local government incentives (tax abatements, etc.)
- Consider requesting special permission (variance) through the Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) process to allow for additional stories (height) beyond what is typically allowed in the zoning regulations. This would be beneficial for:
 - a. Increasing density in downtown areas
 - b. Accommodating more housing units
 - c. Encouraging mixed-use development
- To address funding gaps, the project should apply for non-competitive, renewable funding through the HUD 811 Mainstream Housing Choice Voucher Program, providing long-term rental assistance and supportive services for individuals with disabilities.
- Note: The cost of two full-time equivalent positions to support case management and service coordination for the 25% of people with disabilities and resident services for the the entire building will be integrated into the annual operating budget to ensure long-term sustainability of program

5. Construction:

- Hire general contractor experienced in affordable housing development
- Complete construction within 18-24 months
- Incorporate sustainable building practices and energy-efficient features

6. Inclusion Concierge Program Implementation:

- Develop and implement Inclusion Concierge program for residents
- Hire and train staff to support residents' needs and to cultivate community between all residents
- Establish partnerships with local service providers and community organizations

7. Resident Leasing and Move-In:

- Develop resident selection criteria and process
- Lease units based on a lottery or waitlist process depending on demand
- Coordinate supportive services for 25% set-aside units and support with move in process

Conclusion

Developing 55-70 units of affordable, disability-inclusive housing in this Atlanta metro community is possible with strong support from state and local partners. The project aligns with market demand, and funding opportunities are available. By following the pathway to development outlined above, The Kelsey can create a vibrant, inclusive community.



About Us

The Kelsey Creates Housing for People with Disabilities.

Based in San Francisco, operating nationally.

We pioneer disability-forward housing solutions that open doors to more affordable homes and opportunities for everyone.

We have 240 homes in our pipeline and lead organizing and advocacy initiatives to support market conditions to make inclusive housing the norm.

