

Getting on the road to housing

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It takes about 5-10 years for most families to plan and execute a housing strategy

- You'll need a roadmap
- And bring a sandwich

ROADMAP TO HOUSING

5- to 10-year timeline



GET ON LISTS

Get on appropriate housing waiting lists. (Ages 18-22)

APPLY FOR BENEFITS

Apply for supportive services and cash benefits that can be used now. (Ages 18-22)

MOVE IN

Execute your housing plan: move in, generalize skills and support systems to the new setting, add any additional services appropriate to the new setting.

ASSESS SKILLS & SUPPORTS

Identify skills your family member has or can acquire, as well as those they will need help with or will need to have done for them. (As early as possible)

BUILD SKILLS

Develop daily living skills and USE them. Develop and implement systems to handle skills your family member will need help with or to have done for them. (While you are waiting for housing)



- The first stop on the roadmap is assessing the skills and supports your family member will need to live as independently as possible.
 - Even in a group home, individuals should be able to participate meaningfully in daily activities.
- This assessment can begin at any time and the results put to good use right away. Even a small child can work on skill development. This process should be well underway by adolescence and should be revisited on a regular basis.
- Learn more and get started at:
<https://autismhousingpathways.org/roadmap-1-assess-skills-and-supports/>



- Once someone is 18, they can get on housing waiting lists as an adult. Lists can be anywhere from 4 to 12 years long, so it makes sense to get on them as early as possible. If you feel that might be too soon, consider these points:
 - Even after your family member gets housing, it may take five years for them to settle in and get all the kinks in supportive systems worked out.
 - You will probably be heavily involved in that settling in process.
 - How old are you at that point?
- Learn more and get started at:
<https://autismhousingpathways.org/roadmap-2-get-on-lists/>



- Many benefits can be applied for as soon as your family member turns 18. They include cash benefits, as well as funding for supportive services. Some examples are:
 - Cash benefits, such as SSI, SSDI, and EAEDC
 - Supportive services, such as DDS, MRC, and MassHealth
 - MassHealth has specific entitlement programs to pay for supports, including:
 - Adult Family Care/Adult Foster Care
 - Personal Care Attendant services
- Learn more and get started at:
<https://autismhousingpathways.org/roadmap-3-apply-for-benefits/>



- Living skills are critical to success in housing.
 - Whether it is taking a shower, taking out the garbage, or taking bank statements to a housing recertification meeting, your family member will need skills, supports, and systems.
 - It is best to develop and practice them while you are waiting for housing, instead of trying to put them together later.
- Learn more and get started at:
<https://autismhousingpathways.org/roadmap-4-build-skills-supports-and-systems/>

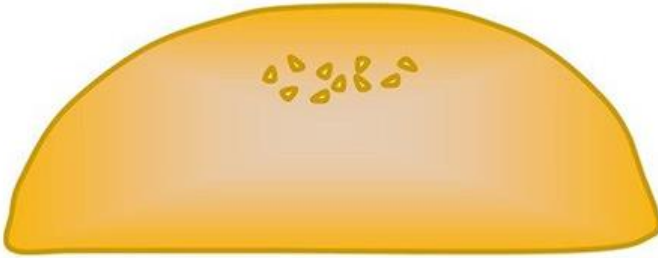


- Once you reach the top of a housing list, it's time to execute your housing plan. Steps here include:
 - Requesting any needed reasonable accommodations
 - Contacting other players who may be involved, such as:
 - The Department of Developmental Services to reassess supports in the new setting;
 - Your provider agency for Adult Family Care or Personal Care Attendant services (if you use them) to reassess supports in the new setting; and
 - Your local building department if you will be using a voucher in an accessory unit.
- This is the time to generalize skills, supportive services, and systems to the new location. You may also find your family member needs additional supports and you need to put more in place.
- Learn more and get started at:
<https://autismhousingpathways.org/roadmap-5-move-in/>



Supported housing is a sandwich

Unpaid support from family and friends
(top bun)



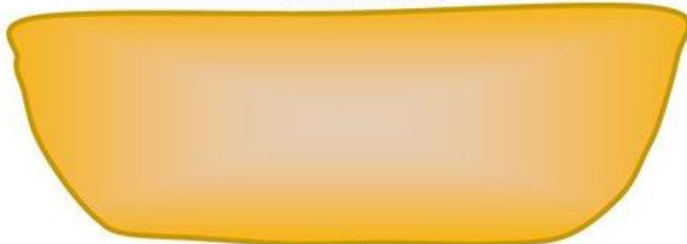
Private-pay services
(mustard, ketchup, and relish)



Government-funded services
(tomatoes, lettuce, and meat)



Affordable or subsidized housing
(bottom bun)



Cap your sandwich off with unpaid support from family and friends

Private-pay services are the condiments (go light on this if you can)

- If your family member needs additional support, you may need to pay for some of it

Government-funded services is the meat

- These can include services from DDS and MassHealth, or federal benefits, such as Social Security and SNAP

Affordable or subsidized housing is your bottom bun

- The subsidy may be attached to a specific unit or it might be a portable voucher

Private pay: why

- Why:

- Sometimes people have been successful in transition programs but fail to successfully transfer skills to living independently or with roommates. They continue to need additional support.
- Sometimes people lose skills over time; autistic burnout is real.

Private pay: when and how

- When and how:
 - For some people it makes sense to work in a step-down fashion:
 - Start with a transition program
 - Move to a private group living situation
 - The cost for these has a VERY wide range, from \$1,000/month to \$6,000/month. Frequently, a portable housing voucher can be used for the housing portion (as opposed to the services), or, in some situations, there is a project-based voucher connected with the unit.
 - Finally, move to independent living with private supports layered on top of public supports
 - Private supports generally costs more per hour than DDS will pay
 - Examples include:
 - AANE's LifeNet (<https://www.aane.org/lifenet/>)
 - BILT (<https://biltne.org>)

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