



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2005

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**NEW STUDY VERIFIES HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS FOR MILLIONS
OF LOW-INCOME PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**National Rent Increases Extensively Exceed SSI Benefits, Bush Administration
Unresponsive to Widening “Affordability Gap”**

WASHINGTON (August 29, 2005) – A national study released today verifies that low-income people with disabilities are experiencing a national housing affordability crisis, paying an average of 109 percent of their monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) income to rent a modest one-bedroom apartment and 96 percent to rent an efficiency at fair market value. The study, *Priced Out in 2004*, was published by the Technical Assistance Collaborative and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force, with funding from the Melville Charitable Trust.

“In this booming housing market, people with disabilities who rely on SSI payments are left further and further behind. Every year, rents for efficiencies and one-bedroom apartments far exceed the incomes for low-income individuals with disabilities,” said Ann O’Hara, Technical Assistance Collaborative Housing Center director and study co-author.

The *Priced Out in 2004* study compares the monthly SSI income of more than 4 million Americans with disabilities to the fair market rental rates for efficiencies and modest one-bedroom apartments in every housing market in the country. For example, Metropolitan Washington, DC is the country’s most expensive housing market area for people with disabilities with one-bedroom units priced at 185 percent of SSI – almost twice the monthly income. People with disabilities in New York City needed 166 percent of monthly SSI to cover the cost of a one-bedroom apartment. Other metropolitan areas with rents well over 100 percent of monthly SSI income in 2004 included Boston at 158 percent, San Francisco at 155 percent, Fort Lauderdale at 147 percent and Chicago at 142 percent.

“Homelessness is one inevitable outcome of this problem. Today, hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities are homeless and living in emergency shelters or on the streets because they cannot afford a decent place to live,” Andrew Sperling, the National Alliance for the

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Mentally Ill and CCD Housing Task Force co-chair. “Others are living at home with aging parents in their 70s and 80s who are desperately seeking housing for their adult child while they still can.”

In 2004, the monthly income of a person with a disability on federal SSI benefits was \$564 while the national average monthly rent for efficiencies or one-bedroom apartments rose to their highest level ever – an average \$676 for a one-bedroom rental. Federal housing affordability guidelines say that low-income households should pay no more than 30 percent of monthly income towards housing costs.

“People with disabilities want to live in their own communities, not institutions or nursing homes. Unfortunately, they are being priced out of their housing markets without much assistance from the federal government,” said Kathy McGinley, National Disability Rights Network Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy and CCD Housing Task Force co-chair. “The Bush Administration needs to ensure that people with disabilities have the same housing opportunities as other Americans.”

In its Fiscal Year 2006 budget proposal to Congress, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sought policy changes that would have reduced rather than expanded affordable and accessible housing opportunities for people with disabilities receiving SSI.

“This report makes a clear and compelling case that only an ongoing monthly housing subsidy is sufficient to close the extreme affordability gap between SSI income and rental housing costs,” said Liz Savage, The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy Disability Policy Collaboration and CCD Housing Task Force co-chair. “Programs such as HUD’s Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program are vital to people with disabilities.”

“The housing problems confronting people with disabilities are pervasive and extend to the lowest cost market areas in the country. It is impossible for people who receive SSI to pay these rents unless they continue to have a Section 8 voucher or some other type of rent subsidy,” said O’Hara.

The study is available at www.c-c-d.org/tf-housing.htm.

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About the Technical Assistance Collaborative

The Technical Assistance Collaborative is a national non-profit organization that works to achieve positive outcomes on behalf of people with disabilities, people who are homeless, and people with other special needs by providing state-of-the-art information, capacity building, and technical expertise to organizations and policymakers in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, human services, and affordable housing.

About the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, DC. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society.