



Housing and Services
Resource Center

Cross-Sector Partnerships to Expand Options for Affordable, Accessible Housing

Transcript from 3rd Ohio Office Hour on 2/10/22

Presenters:

- Justin Moor, Vice President of Planning and Program Development, Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio
- Ash Lemons, Associate Director, The Ability Center of Greater Toledo

Facilitator: Lori Gerhard, Administration for Community Living

LORI GERHARD:

Well, good afternoon, everyone, we're going to go ahead and get started.

I'd like to welcome you to the cross-sector partnerships to expand options for affordable, accessible housing, office hour session, if we can go to the next slide. My name is Lori Gerhard and I work at the Administration for Community Living and lead the Office of Interagency Innovation. We work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. We call them ASPE, A-S-P-E, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services CMS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration SAMHSA also called SAMHSA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, H-U-D or HUD to support the development of partnerships across the disability, aging, health and housing sector to help people remain stably housed, help those that are experiencing homelessness obtain housing and the services they need, and help those living in institutions transition back to the community. As federal partners, we leverage our collective technical assistance resources through the Housing and Services Resource Center. Thank you for joining the Housing and Services Resource Center today for this third office hour session. Next slide.

The session will feature partnerships between the housing sector and aging and disability networks. You'll hear firsthand from our speakers from Ohio regarding how they formed their partnership and learn how they are expanding options for older adults and people with disabilities to find housing and services to live in their communities. Next slide.

Before we get started, we'd like to address a few housekeeping items. The meeting is being recorded, by staying to participate, you are consenting to the recording. Also for audio quality, we're starting with all attendees in a listen only mode. That means your microphone or phone is muted but please know we very much want to hear your questions and the strategies you may be using to develop partnerships. Please, frequently use the chat to make comments and to ask the presenters questions at any time during the session. If it's a question for a presenter, please start your chat with Question for and then enter the speaker's name or you may email a question or comment to hsrc@hcl.hhs.gov. We reserved

time during this session to address your questions. During the Q&A period, you may use the Zoom reactions function to raise your virtual hand so we'll know who wants to raise the question and can call on you as time permits. You can also use the chat or email if you have a technical issue or comment for other attendees. Next slide.

HHS and HUD recently launched the Housing and Services Resource Center. We're so proud of this opportunity. We've had over 10,000 people visit the website and thousands of people participate in our technical assistance activities. Next slide. We are working together to develop partnerships across the disability, aging, health, and housing sector to expand access to affordable, accessible housing, support people in finding and keeping their housing, provide access to services people choose that support independence and well-being. Next slide.

These partnerships bring together housing, homelessness services, aging and disability services, health, physical behavior, and mental health services, states and communities and we're all working together so people with disabilities and older adults can stay stably housed, healthy and active, and engaged in their communities. Next slide.

Through the Housing and Services Resource Center, we provide coordinated technical assistance across the federal agencies for growing cross-sector partnerships at the state and community levels. We assist communities in leveraging new housing and services resources, including those from the American Rescue Plan. Our website at acl.gov/housing-and-services includes resources and tools that support learning and cross-sector action. We offer office hours and webinars, learning collaboratives, toolkits and more. Next slide.

Office hours are designed to showcase real world examples of an activity taught by the people who are engaged in the activity. It's a time to learn how to get started, discuss methods to stakeholders from different sectors used and receive practical tips, I like to say peers teaching peers. It is also a time to share your strategies for developing partnerships with others. Next slide.

We'll start this session with a short presentation followed by a long period for participants' questions and discussions that support peer-to-peer sharing. It gives me great pleasure to introduce our speakers for today's call. Justin Moor, who is the vice president of planning and program development at the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio. And then you'll hear from Ash Lemons, who is the associate director with the Ability Center of Greater Toledo, a center for independent living. I'll turn things over to Justin to get us started. Justin.

JUSTIN MOOR:

Thanks so much, Lori. Welcome, everybody. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedules to participate in this office hour session. This is a partnership I think of great partners. I think of the Ability Center. I think of our Center for Independent Living in Toledo as kind of that model partnership. The Ability Center and the Area Office on Aging really are all about making sure that people in our community thrive regardless of age, regardless of ability and there's a lot of common ground and services that we focus on that we do better in serving our constituents we serve when we do it together. Next slide, please.

This area of housing is one that has been a big focus for us for several decades now and the ways that our two agencies partner and this slide just kind of illustrates why housing? We know that longevity and health a lot of times are determined not so much by what takes place by, you know, with a person's genetics or even with things like health care. You know what takes place within the four walls of a doctor's office or a hospital, but instead are really largely determined by what takes place in their home and their home environment and their behaviors in the home and the like. So we know that home is a critical part of health as well as longevity, and both of those are goals for individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, individuals who are in different places on the aging journey. So we know that this housing area is a critical piece. And on the next slide, we'll see why for us as an area agency on aging, housing is such an important focus area for the vast majority of the individuals that we serve. Housing is our biggest expense, and this is an area where many people really worry about the cost of health care because they know that they have housing, that they're living in and that is eating up a significant chunk of their fixed income and retirement. We also know that they are oftentimes dealing with increased transportation costs. When I first came across this statistic about transportation being a second expense in retirement, highest expense in retirement, it shocked me. I had not thought of transportation that way and I think most individuals that are saving up a retirement nest egg also are not planning for and saving up for a significant portion of their retirement expenses need to be dedicated toward transportation. But when you think about it, if you're in a position where you need to hang up the keys because you've been in a lot of accidents recently and you feel like you might not be safe enough to drive anymore or, you know, driving at dark is tough and you have someplace you want to go, paying for transportation can add up really quickly as a big expenditure. Next slide, please.

So this just talks about unaffordable housing and how one out of every four older adults are living in housing that's unaffordable. So these are individuals who contact our agencies everyday, and there are people who are really making those tough decisions between paying for that new expensive prescription their doctor prescribed them or paying their mortgage or the rent for the month. You know, increased utility costs also are a big factor and a big concern for many older adults. Having a grandchild, you know, a knock on the door from the police saying that their grandchild is going to go into the foster care system because of something that happened with their biological mom or dad unless they move in with them. Having those grandchildren move in with them as an additional mouth for them to feed that they hadn't planned on with their fixed income and the like. So, there's all these kinds of scenarios that really put a strain and a lot of stress on older adults financially, emotionally and the like. So finding a way to help individuals get more in the way of affordable, accessible, safe and beautiful housing is a common area and common concern for the both the Ability Center and Area Agencies on Aging. Next slide, please.

So when you take a look at that stat I just talked about before, one out of every four older adults are living in housing that's unaffordable. For our region in northwest Ohio, that's about 40,000 older adults that are in unaffordable housing. Yet we only have 3,803 affordable housing units. So that gap between 40,000 older northwest Ohioans are living in unaffordable housing, and the 3,800 housing subsidies that are available for affordable housing starts to speak to that unmet need for affordable, accessible, safe and beautiful housing in our communities. Next slide, please.

So the Area Office on Aging, our CEO, Mrs. Johnson, about 35 years ago was really attuned to this and saw this unmet need for affordable housing, particularly in the rural parts of our area. So she worked on getting three housing subsidiary corporations built for affordable, accessible, safe and as you see in these pictures, beautiful housing in those areas. And on the next slide, you'll see a couple more pictures of a couple more of those properties and then also helped work with for-profit developers to really develop the campus at our headquarters design to include some safe, affordable, accessible and beautiful housing here on our campus as well. And we do that not because, you know, we're looking to have a housing developer be our main hat that we wear as an area agency on aging, but instead, because we know that with our agency having an active role in housing development, there's going to be more quantitatively and better qualitatively housing for older adults than there otherwise would be. Some of the housing on our campus, if you go to the next slide, please.

There's a lot here on this campus. There's a Veterans Administration clinic right across the street from our office. Our offices is in kind of the top right corner. But this whole campus is something that our CEO really helped develop. It includes a sight center of northwest Ohio right next to us for providing services for individuals with lower limited vision. There's a senior center on campus here. There's an advanced specialty hospital kind of set down for individuals that might be on a ventilator and things like that. There's a board of developmental disabilities on our campus and lot of affordable, accessible, safe housing, and that includes both housing for older adults, as well as housing for individuals under the age of 60 with some disabilities. That includes veteran housing for individuals who are, permanent supportive housing for them. Yeah, the post office right across the street. There's just a service rich campus here and housing rich campus here. The Red Cross is also kind of catty corner from our campus, so a lot on this campus has really been intentionally developed over the years. Next slide, please.

And then the Area Office on Aging also is very attuned to the fact that fragmented care is not healthy for anyone, right. If we have somebody that's just looking at somebody's long-term services and supports over here and somebody else's focus on their health care, that a lot of times staff will fall through the cracks in those scenarios and individuals will be told to contact the other kind of entity that's seen on their health care or the health care entity will tell them to contact their organizations helping with their long-term service and supports and just results in a really frustrating scenario for the individual that we're aiming to serve. So we've been working with four managed care plans to really take a comprehensive look at the needs of individuals, both from a long-term service and support standpoint, as well as a health care standpoint. So these are four entities we're working with. We're also helping individuals who are transitioning from hospital to home, so they're set up for success in coming home and not having to unnecessarily be readmitted to hospital or be able to avoid an unnecessary discharge to a nursing home, but instead allowing people to move home where they want to be and be set up for that with different services and supports. So, they're set up for success at home. Next slide, please.

So now hand it off to Ash from the Ability Center for him to talk a little bit about some of the specific ways that we've had the pleasure of partnering with the Ability Center over the last several decades. Ash.

ASH LEMONS:

Thanks, Justin. That's a great segue. We're talking about nursing homes and nursing home transition back in 2011. We were transition coordinators for our Money Follows the Person grant, which we call Home Choice in Ohio. And early on, we recognized the barrier where if you look in this picture, this gentleman is at his home and there's a ramp in the background and he didn't get home right away. There was a barrier, and that was that the ramp wasn't there. And at one point in time in Ohio, if you were living in an institution and you needed a ramp on your home in the community, you weren't able to get funding to put that ramp on your home. So a lot of people were kind of stuck in the institution with no option. Well, an unsafe option, actually. So what we did is I reached out to Justin. We had a lot of folks on our list that had this barrier immediately and we pulled some money together along with the Toledo Rotary, their Office on Aging and the Ability Center. We all pooled some money together and we bought three ramp systems and we started moving people out of institutions back into their own home. That pilot project saw us be able to get 11 people out in the first year. In fact, the first lady that we were able to successfully get up out of the institution and back home using this process, we got out the day before Thanksgiving which was a great Thanksgiving for her and her family. So it became a model for the entire state for 10 years. And during those 10 years, we accumulated quite a few ramps because once we got people out of the institution, once we got them their temporary ramp, we would look for funding, we would use our grants, our home aid grants to get them a permanent project or we would work with their Office on Aging for them to access waiver in the community and put a permanent project on. We reclaimed those ramps when we could and we've paid it forward. We've helped other people that were in similar situations where they were in a bind and so far, we've helped 153 people. So, that really helps people be able to move back home and have choice and live in a community that they choose. Next slide, please.

So another way in which we partner is Olmsted home modifications. If you look at the bottom here, there's a lady. Our average age demographic is a 64-year-old single female with a physical disability, and over the years, we literally serve thousands of people with home modifications. Sixty percent of those have been people over the age of 60. So there's a lot of synergy between the cohorts that we serve. We've done so much business with our Area Office on Aging that we've actually, just when you look at the Medicaid beds alone, we've done \$1.4 billion worth of business with them and we've done additional projects with our grants for seniors. So that's a huge collaboration to accomplish that amount of work to help just in the seven county to 10 county area that we serve together. So, next slide, please.

Another area in which we partner is we not only provide people with home modifications, when we do that, we also provide them with durable medical equipment. Again, here are our average person demographic of the person that we serve is a 66-year-old female, single, a lot of times widowed with a physical disability. The things that we typically provide as far as durable medical equipment are things that you find commonly in your bathroom and they help prevent falls. So there are things that are often not covered by insurance as well. If you look left there, there's a top 5 that made it easy for everyone. If you wanted to start one of these programs, I can tell you what we did last year. We handed out just under two thousand pieces of equipment. We served 783 and about 15% of those referrals came directly from the Area Office on Aging and about half of the referrals came from a local hospital.

The equipment that's often requested is for people to remain safe in the shower or to be able to do better by themselves in the bathroom. As we know, that's kind of the common place where people have falls. I look at it as a fall prevention program. We're helping people remain safe in their homes and be able to do self-care, to be able to transfer, to be able to shower and remain independent in their homes. So you might ask, how do you fund this? Every state has a state-designated assistive technology agency and the Ability Center. We have a grant through AT Ohio, which is housed with the Ohio State University, and we work directly with them to serve people. We also run this program off of donations. So we have a lot of people that recognize that we have this program in the community. It's a great pay it forward when you no longer need it, the program. We bring the products in, we sanitize them and we put them back in service and we just continue to pay it forward year after year. Next slide, please.

So if I have stands for home accessibility projects, this is just another pie chart showing the aging and disability connection. If we look at one year of our projects. You look at the pie chart on the left. 63% of the people that we served were over the age of 60 and that's been holding steady for as long as I've been with the Ability Center, which is nearly 20 years. Almost every year I run the statistic and it's, I kind of surprise our data people because I said it's probably going to be around 60% and it always is. So there's a lot of synergy between people with disabilities and aging. You know, it's kind of a natural part of aging. What do we provide? Those are those home modification projects are typically ramps, stairlifts, common that people need when they want to remain in their home but all their bathrooms and bedrooms are upstairs. We provide stairlifts, grab bars and handrails. The pie chart on the right is basically showing you how we've kind of diversified that program. We have carpenters in-house. We've been able to control our quality by having carpenters staffed by us. We've been able to do a really good job with getting very neat, durable medical equipment to people while we're actually doing the home modifications. And if you see 42% of our business is coming from fee for service, that's coming from your office on aging bids. Until we had that, you can see the other pie chart, on the pie chart it says 47% of those were grants and you know, like grants don't always come every year, right, or you might run out of funding. This is a great way to keep carpenters busy. So partnering with your area agency on aging can help you provide better service to your entire community by kind of controlling quality and having better access to durable medical equipment and additional services. So it's kind of a bonus. Next slide, please. So this is the last slide I've got.

So there are a lot of projects that we do that are applicable to aging and disability, but yet some of them aren't done in conjunction with their Office on Aging. Some of those are done solo and I kind of boxed them into different things. You know, we've got educational-based advocacy. On the right-hand screen here, you see a book. That one is a book that we actually produced about five years ago, and it really focuses in on the rights of people with disabilities to live in a community. So in that book, it was written by our staff attorney. We focused on Olmsted and the ADA, local advocacy zoning restrictions. We get heavy into that so people know how to advocate when they're zoning restrictions that may prevent you from installing a ramp. We focus on reasonable accommodations as well, and it goes hand in hand with zoning. And we focus on visibility in Universal Design in housing. And so that booklet, I can give you the link. If you Google the title and put Ability Center, it will show

up. I should mention we also produced another book on transportation and I have the link to that as well. And it's called Vital Connections, and it's all about rights of people with disabilities to inclusive, accessible transportation. So that's one way as we educate. We create documents that help people understand what their rights are and how to access services. On that left-hand pane where you see the words housing, these are just a few things we did recently. We passed an ordinance in the city of Toledo. So you no longer can have people discriminating based on source of income. And you see I have included Section 8 vouchers, if you're not working with your local housing authority, do so because we recently were able to get 15 people approved for housing vouchers. And when we were doing the Home Choice program, we literally had like 50 or 60 people at any given time that were receiving vouchers. And so they've been a great partner to and getting extra benefits, so it's more affordable for people to live in the community. That's systems advocacy and the bottom part that talks about accessibility reviews and then here this was, we don't typically get involved in cases. We like to be proactive. We like to collaborate. This one we tried that, it didn't work out for like two years and so we finally had to pull out our gloves. But it had a good result in, basically, the housing was multi-unit housing, and it was built with steps and it's most people now. Multi-unit family complexes are all under fair housing act. They're not supposed to have steps. So it follows the commercial code in Ohio, they're not supposed to have steps. So we engage with builders and developers, but we try to do so in a proactive way and provide information about universal design and building better so that all people can live in a community, just like Justin said. The number one issue that we run into is housing affordability and accessibility, and in it being safe in the neighborhood of their choosing. And then the second right behind it, which is ironic, we didn't look at each other as information before we had came up with these PowerPoints but ours was transportation too and it's kind of natural. We do share information with each other quite a bit but housing and transportation remains top barriers. And that's all I've got. Thank you for your time.

JUSTIN MOOR:

Thank you, Ash. I think I'll just share here one of most recent ways, I'll do a quick demo and then we'll open up for questions because I saw some that came in the chat here, Ash, for you.

So this is an area where both our agencies get a lot of calls about what housing is available? I'm looking to move. I need a place to go and a lot of times for, you know, the first 15 or so years of my work at the Area Office and housing unit, here's a list of all the different places that you can contact. And in Lucas County alone, where the city Toledo is, that's 109 different places that were on that list. That's a lot of calling around for people. We know too that a lot of times when people call those, organizations or property managers might be part time, might only be there are some of the time. If they have a turnover with the housing manager, the timeliness of getting a call back from those individuals might be a long time. And if they don't have any vacancies, they might not call the person back unfortunately at all. So the person is kind of left in limbo, wondering whether or not the housing is available. So what we did is we jointly funded putting together a housing search tool that people can either go online themselves and do, or they can call either of our agencies and our agencies will have an information referral specialists kind of verbally ask the questions of the individuals over the phone and then plug in the responses. Tell them verbally that kind of housing best bets or mail it to them, text it to them, email to them, whatever they want. So I'm just going to say here with the example that Ash gave off on

their average consumer. Let's say the person has a disability their age, 64 years old, and we'll say that they're looking for, let's say, their household income is in the 20-25,000 range and they're looking for housing in Toledo, they could specify a zip code if they wanted to. So it's 43 search results out of those 109, 43 of those are a fit for that individual in that scenario. They can see really quick on a snapshot with their estimated rent would be based on their household size, based on their household income range. They can see whether or not there is a deposit required, whether or not there's an application fee. How many bedrooms they have, whether or not there is a waitlist, if so, what the average wait time is. You know, if there's pets allowed or not. And what you'll see is I'll change here the income range from 20-25,000 and 25-30,000, and you'll see the number of results go from forty-three to thirty-five. You'll see that some of the rents adjust that are 30% of income. So instead of 625, it went to 750 for the estimated rents that individual. And again, this allows us to print these results and easy read format, allows us to create PDFs of them so that you will be able to email or text individuals. So and we did something similar in the area of transportation to make a kind of one-click transportation search for individuals so they can get a sense of the estimated time for a certain transportation provider. The estimated cost for that specific trip, for that specific transportation provider and the like. So this is just a highlight of some of the most recent ways that we've been partnering with the Ability Center.

So now it looks like you have some questions for Ash that we probably want to get to.

LARKE RECCHIE:

Yeah, Ash. I see here there Isaac Dean from Columbus says they also have that source of income discrimination. I think there's a lot of interest in that but they've found it incredibly difficult to practically enforce that, especially from the outside. So I think there's interest in what strategies have you been using to ensure that landlords are complying with those ordinances?

ASH LEMONS:

So it was just recently passed and what I would say is Katie Thomas is our staff attorney and she's not with me right now, but I would love to get feedback from her on that and get back to you because I'm sure she's thought that through and have a strategy with her team. It could almost be an entire session, I would imagine. Katie knows a lot, and she's produced these two books.

So I can get anyone that wants to, I can get her in touch or get kind of a generalized answer back to you guys.

LARKE RECCHIE:

Great, and I will vouch for that. That Katie does know quite a bit. But have you had any local movement on advocacy or policy for landlords who do not want to support home mods for their tenants?

ASH LEMONS:

Yeah, interesting enough, when I first came up to the Ability Center to run our home modification program about 14 years ago, I noticed the pattern when I was processing the paperwork, and every now and then there would be people who would kind of not be

interested in signing the paperwork to allow a tenant to get a home modification. And so I kind of just cited some of the Fair Housing Act. It's right on our application and gave the code reference, you know. So we had about three passages from the Fair Housing Act, a couple of sentences long I could share those with you guys. But it, from what I heard from people, the ones that looked at it said, I never knew this, but I'm glad you gave me the information because I looked up the code citation and I educated myself, and I'll be glad to sign this paperwork.

LARKE RECCHIE:

Yeah. So, yeah, I think sharing Katie's information will be helpful too for Elizabeth Glantz and her questions around, you know, strategies as well. And I see there is a lot here frustration with landlords and sometimes even those landlords are family members.

So Justin and Ash, how do you generate this database on affordable housing? Do housing providers submit their information or do you data share with HUD?

JUSTIN MOOR:

Yeah, so I can start off addressing that one that Ash didn't add to the response. So there are other tools out there. There's a Section 8. There's a state-run database that is housing, and we really looked at those hard and said, you know, they all have some nice things about them, but they all had some significant from our perspective and handling calls, giving helpful information to callers. They all had some significant drawbacks. They all had this, they were all dependent on housing providers supply and going out of their way and going on the website and updating their information and supplying information in the way and so there is a significant gap, right, those that did not supply any information. And then for those that did supply information, a lot of times it was outdated because they did it three years ago and they didn't go in there and update it when they no longer had a vacancy or there'd be the type of information that they feel comfortable giving out to people who call saying, how much rent will I pay when I move in? And so what we end up doing is taking over, even though it's more labor intensive. We jointly hired a housing navigator position that's kind of embedded in our aging disability resource network that, it was a default person that scaling these housing calls, but also the default person that is, in many cases, cold calling all 109 of those properties just in Lucas County and trying to get all the information that's necessary for this and where they're not getting responses for individuals, they are being a complete test for that individual. You're not going on their site until they do get a response. They're also looking at all different kinds of other information sources for that housing facility to be able to get their information. Sometimes, you know, contacting residents that we know and observed that live there to get information from them. But it would be not uncommon for some other types of systems and databases that are out there for the rent information to say the rent is from zero to \$1200. Well, that's a huge range. If I'm looking for a place that costs me \$500 a month, I want to know, is it like zero or is it 1200 or is it like around 500, is it something I can afford or not? So that housing navigator also took a deep dive into what kind of funding went into the building that property to know what the sliding fee scale, if you will, of the rent is and then to know what that would translate to. So, for example, if the property is 30% of income because of the funding source that was used to build it, then were able to do that math on the back. And the person says their income is 20-25,000, that results in \$625 a month. That's kind of worst-case scenario rent for that individual. But then there's other sliding fee scales, again, we

kind of tag in the back end of that database so that when an individual chooses their household size, when they choose their income range, it does the math automatically for them on what that estimated kind of worst-case scenario rent is for them. The other thing that does is if that property, let's say, only has one-bedroom units it, we have the assumption that only two heartbeats per bedroom. So if a person says that they are a household-sized three, when they click submit, it removes that property from the search result, that property that only has one-bedroom units does not show up for them. So it really does provide a tailored and customized list that does help one, that individual knowing kind of what their housing best bets are. We're also working, our photography consultant has been going all across town and taking pictures of all of these properties, both outside and some inside pictures so that we can add those pictures to this housing list as well. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. If it saves the individual from having to go all around town to look at these places to see if they're a good fit for them, we're all for that. You know, saving trips, then again, get a quick snapshot of whether or not this place might be a good fit for them.

LARKE RECCHIE:

So I see Molly also put the link in there for anybody who's interested in going and exploring for themselves. It's just such a great tool that you have. Circling back a little bit Justin, they're asking about Emily or Elizabeth asking about strategies to get community interest and support for your campus and what kind of funding streams were there with the veterans housing, was VA funding part of it? So, you know, she notes that she's seen a lot of communities getting big pushback about affordable housing projects. I think we see that across the nation and in and her area, developers are able to pay a fee in lieu of including affordable units and apartment complexes. So can you talk a little more about that?

JUSTIN MOOR:

Yeah, that's a great question. That's one where there's lots of different possible options. Here on our campus, the Housing Authority provides a sense of place-based vouchers to make those units affordable. There's also HUD Section 202 properties, some tax credit properties, there's also just private kind of market rate apartments here on campus. And you know, right now there's American Rescue Plan Act dollars that are in every community across the nation that many of those communities are trying to figure out how to spend them, how affordable housing checks all the boxes on possible great ways that they could invest those dollars. Here in the city of Toledo, we just partnered with some housing developers to submit three affordable housing development projects to the city of Toledo. They're earmarking 16 million of their American Rescue Plan Act dollars for building five hundred affordable housing units. So that's a significant dollar amount for the city of Toledo. That's four times what our normal affordable housing funding is at the city of Toledo for two years. So this is really kind of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build affordable housing units in your community. Again, the county, the cities that have these funds, if they are not already looking to use some of their funds for that purpose, I encourage you to contact your county commissioners, your mayor or your city council members and the like and let them know that you want to see some of those dollars dedicated for affordable housing. And again, I think even if they have not pursued those dollars yet, or maybe they have, and you feel like it's too late, I would encourage you still to contact them because the reality is those funds need to be used by September 30th, 2024, and there's going to be some projects that are more shovel ready than others. And for some of those, they are not

able to kind of follow-through and meet that progressive timeline, they might be looking for somebody else to step in and take that funding and take that place.

LARKE RECCHIE:

So, Ash, I see someone wants, Juliana wants some clarification about the home modifications, if they're available to renter households as well.

ASH LEMONS:

We have some of our own funding that we use for renters, and we've sought some funding through foundations, grants, our Community Development Block Grant funding and our state Ohio Development Services Agency funding. We actually have so many people that own that are qualified. We use all of it and so, and we got a pretty good award last time. It was \$300,000. So we're going through a lot of funding in our area and that was over two years, but we have a lot of CDBG funding too. So we have no lack of qualified individuals with disabilities looking for home modifications that exhaust all of the funding. So in knowing that there are some people that are renting that need home mods, we've come up with some of our own funding. It's a smaller pot, but we've done it. Most of the time we're trying to help them relocate because a lot of times they're in a situation where it's not accessible or it's not affordable. And so this new relocation tool that Area Office on Aging has that they keep updated, it's been a good resource to go to.

LARKE RECCHIE:

That's great, I see how those two things work together then. I wanted to point out there are a lot of good resources here in the chat, including attorney Katie Thomas and her, the two booklets that Ash referenced earlier. So that's wonderful stuff and also Justin put in the link to the transportation search, which since housing and transportation are the major things, that's wonderful, and I think Molly and Lori have added things about the assistive technology work. So we, you know, we're kind of wondering if anybody else wants to talk about what's going on in their areas too and how communities might be using the American Rescue Plan funding. So, I know we would appreciate anybody raising their hand or putting in the chat information about what they're doing. But what you guys are doing is extraordinary but maybe it doesn't have to be extraordinary because I think a lot of AAAs and CILs could be working together on these kind of projects. But I'm wondering if you can talk about, a little bit about sort of the genesis of that. And I know both your agencies are long-standing in your communities. But I'm wondering too like what do you see about the commonalities among the older adults and the younger? What do you see as the main differences and how do you kind of forge this kind of collaboration?

JUSTIN MOOR:

Ash, do you want to take that or you want me to?

ASH LEMONS:

You can start, I have a little to add but if you want to start, that's fine.

JUSTIN MOOR:

Yeah, I think that both of our agencies have a strong desire to be person-centered, strong desire to help individuals survive, to thrive in the community setting, to remain at home whenever possible and whenever it's safe for them to do so and the like. So I think those

are real rallying points for both of our agencies where we can talk about different approaches to achieving those ends and the like. By the end of the day, the calls that our agencies are receiving, there's a lot of similarities. We're both getting a lot of calls about individuals who are looking for housing help. We get lots of calls from people that are looking for transportation help. That's part of the reason why we are focusing on those two topics right now with these transportation searches and housing searches that are starting off in Lucas County, because that's where, at least for our agency across our 10-county area, that's where 45% percent of the adult population resides. But expanding that to our other counties as well, the whole adaptive equipment is another topic that we get lots of contacts about it. Both of our agencies, we both have an advocacy focus. I would say from my experience that the advocacy focus at Ability Center is extremely strong but we also have roots and experience with advocacy at the area concerning aging level as well. So I think that there's lots of areas where we can advocate both locally, state, and nationally together with a collective voice.

ASH LEMONS:

Yeah, we actually, I just have our information from the end of the year, all of our charts and data handy, and out of 4,100 calls that we received that we made into information and referral calls the number one was home on modifications, so its housing related. It represented almost 1,900 of those calls. Out of the 4,100 calls recorded, it represented 1,900, housing. Number two was assistive technology, durable medical equipment came in around 1,100, and we have a dog program. We're kind of unique. That was the third one with 320, that's not typical. We have service and therapy dogs and we're in 22 different schools, so we're kind of unique there. So I'll skip that one. But advocacy is funny because Justin just named all three of our top four. Advocacy is number three with 248 calls. The other thing and around advocacy like for transportation, when we have issues with people getting to the grocery store for food or to help getting to health care appointments because they're not on public roads and we've done a lot of advocacy together to get countywide transportation, and we were just able to get that, probably this fall. I think it was this fall Justin, that just passed in and really, I think it was Billie Johnson from your agency and Tim Harrington, our previous executive director who really kind of spearheaded a lot of the workaround how that even eventually got passed. So the credit to them.

JUSTIN MOOR:

Yeah, the thing I'll add to that is, you know, there is our public transit authority quit holiday hours, quit weekend hours for, because of budget constraints going back several years and our agencies took the lead together to call together all the different community stakeholders to get those restored and piece together funding and getting funding commitments from different agencies in a very creative way to get those services restored, which definitely enhances the lives of both individuals of all abilities and individuals of all ages. The other thing I'll add is sometimes in Toledo, we had the biggest event in women's golf nationally came to Toledo, and we were focused on making that a user-friendly experience for people, regardless of ability, regardless of age. So that's just another way where we are making sure that these event planners [...] and all the different considerations that you can think about are thought through from the perspective of somebody that's aging or somebody with, you know, might be in a wheelchair or whatever the case might be.

LARKE RECCHIE:

So I think it's really interesting to hear about your own iteration, but thanks to Lori Gerhard, because ACL has done a lot about trying to, you know, the whole work of the aging and disability community and she did put a link in here about programs with aging and disability networks. So I think that's fascinating to kind of look at that around the country and what area agencies on aging and CILs in particular are doing. So I don't know if we have other questions, but I think that it would be perfect timing if somebody wants to chime in with another question. Otherwise, we're going to turn this back over to Lori Gerhard from ACL, who can kind of wrap up and help us with understanding where we go from here. I don't see another question Lori so.

LORI GERHARD:

Alright, well, thank you so much, Larke and Justin and Ash and all of you for those great questions. This has really been a fabulous session. We are going to start our wrap up and we'd like to ask first that if you could please email us at hsrc@acl.hhs.gov and let us know how we can improve the next office hour session. We'd like to learn what you liked about the session and how you could use the information that you learned today to further develop and strengthen the partnerships that you have in the disability, aging, health and housing sector. We had over 100 people register for today's office hours, which is really fabulous, and so we will be notifying all webinar registrants and we also had a signup page for those that weren't able to register because we had reached our cap. So we'll be emailing everyone when the recording slides and transcripts are available on ACL.gov. We'd like to ask if you haven't already to please sign up for ACL email updates. We'll be sharing information through ACL email updates around an array of information that really helps people, older adults and people with disabilities and caregivers really live full lives in the community. I really want to take a moment now and just thank today's presenters Justin Moore, Ash Lemons and Larke Recchie for sharing this rich information and how they formed their partnership and showcasing their work. We want to thank our ASL interpreter, (UNKNOWN) and our CART staff Nicholas for the great work they've done in helping to make today's session accessible.

We especially want to thank the staff at the Housing and Services Resource Center, especially the team at USAging and Mission Analytics and the staff at the Administration for Community Living and our federal partners at ASPE, CMS, SAMHSA and HUD for the collective work to produce today's office hour session, and most importantly, we really want to thank each and every one of you for your attendance, your great questions and your participation in today's office hour session. In closing, if you have suggestions on technical assistance topics or you have a partnership across disability, aging, health and housing organizations and have an innovative initiative you are doing to increase access to affordable, accessible housing and our services, please tell us about it by emailing us hsrc@acl.hhs.gov. We'd like to learn about your partnerships and the work you're doing together to increase housing stability, help those who are in institutions, transition back to the community and to help those that are homeless obtain housing and the services they are seeking to live full lives in the community. It's only by learning from all of you the activities that are going out there that we can really help strengthen all of our knowledge across the country on how we can better serve older adults and people with disabilities and caregivers to really increase stability and access to services. Thank you for the work you do each day to serve older adults, people with disabilities, their families and caregivers and have a wonderful day.