

Intentional Communities Overview

A Sustainable Housing Option

An intentional community for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) is a voluntary residential setting designed around shared values, mutual support, and purposeful, cooperative living, often showing better outcomes for people with IDD compared to traditional settings.

Key characteristics often include

- **Shared Purpose:** Residents, often including staff or volunteers ("life-sharers"), consciously choose to live together for mutual support and connection
- **Person-Centered Focus:** These models prioritize individual autonomy, allowing residents to choose their service providers, roommates, and schedules.
- **Supportive Environment:** An alternative to isolated living by fostering a sense of belonging, often featuring shared spaces (like kitchens or common areas)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE a housing option aiming to create shared, affordable, and accessible housing and amenities for the I/DD population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE NOT a new phenomenon, but rather a proven, long-term solution for community building.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE advocating for individualized, person-centered care, allowing residents to choose their service providers, roommates, and schedules based on self-determined choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE NOT congregate care facilities or institutions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE a direct solution to the isolation and loneliness felt by many IDD individuals, providing a pedestrian-friendly, social environment that fosters true friendships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE NOT isolating. individuals will be encouraged to participate in activities within the local community to build real-world relationships and "one-on-one" community integration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE designed to foster greater community integration through amenities, activities and social enterprise needed in the broader community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ARE NOT increasing segregation; they align with the state's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan to reduce segregation and increase community-based programming.

Pocket Style Neighborhoods for Special Niches

A community designed to provide safe and permanent housing for adults with intellectual, developmental and acquired disabilities

Key Features of pocket style living include

- **Clustered Housing:** Small homes or apartments are arranged facing each other around a central, shared, and managed green space, such as a courtyard, garden, or common building.
- **"Scale of Sociability":** The design encourages, but does not force, social interaction among neighbors, preventing isolation while respecting privacy.
- **A Community Center:** A shared, central building that provides a community kitchen, lounge, game room, or meeting space for social activities and classes, therapies and vocational training.
- **Non-Institutional Vibe:** Homes are designed to look and feel like a traditional, charming neighborhood rather than a large, impersonal facility.



Safety and Support Features

- **Homes are oriented** so that front porches and windows overlook the central, shared space, allowing residents to look out for one another.
- **Integrated Support Staff:** Trained staff are often available, sometimes living on-site in separate, designated homes, to provide tailored coaching
- **Roads are placed** around the perimeter of the community - not through it.

Proximity to Amenities: These communities are typically located near public transportation, shopping, and entertainment to facilitate community participation

Vocational Opportunities: Some, such as those built around a farm or garden, offer on-site or nearby opportunities for work, skill-building, and meaningful activity.

Individual Ownership/Lease: Residents often have the option to own their home or lease, which provides long-term stability and protects against landlords selling the home, while building equity.